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The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

TAKE & GIVE AT CHRYSLER

Ready now, students of corporate economics in the *classe politique*? Who is the chairman of General Motors? Who is the chairman of Ford? Can't quite call up the names, can you? But we all know who's the chairman of Chrysler, the littlest of the Big Three but the one with the best P.R. Lee Iacocca's celebrity is not simply an epiphenomenon of American capitalism but the essence of the new industrial system in which personality and politics are packaged with material goods. Chrysler's historic turnaround from near-bankruptcy to hyperprofitability came from selling the salesman as much as pushing the product, which makes an automobile marketing drive just like an electoral campaign.

Iacocca's grand strategy led him into rough territory last week, when his company failed to offer United Automobile Workers negotiators an acceptable contract and some 80,000 workers struck in the United States and Canada. At the heart of the matter is Chrysler's implicit assumption that the workers deserve little credit for the company's soaring profits—$4.38 billion after taxes in the past three and a half years. Iacocca got the TV exposure, and his little cars proved popular; but the miracle would not have happened without the workers' concessions and paybacks, not to mention the Treasury's largesse.

Now it's time for the union to recoup its losses, just as Chrysler erased its red ink. But not without a fight: the company is loath to establish the principle that its employees should be paid and benefited according to industrywide norms, even though its executives and shareholders prosper with the best of them. As we went to press, the strike looked as if it might not last long, but the larger issue remains. Unions across the country are also asking if the "partnership" imposed on them by their bosses in the recent recession is not a permanent position of penury.

HIJACKING BACKWASH
Stanley Reed
Milton Viorst
Aryeh Neier

FARRAKHAN
Christopher Hitchens

THE F.C.C.'S GIV[illegible] £
Ber[illegible]
Nossiter

INDIA(!)
Arthur C. Danto

NO BROADWAY MELODIES
Paul Berman

GETTING STRAIGHT
Andrew Kopkind

THE A.N.C. AND THE UNIONS

THE BLACK AGENDA FOR SOUTH AFRICA

MIKE CALABRESE AND MIKE KENDALL

All but the extreme right wing in South Africa and the United States realize majority rule is inevitable in South Africa. Only three questions remain: How long a wait? How violent a struggle? How radical the result? The longer the bloody status quo continues, the harsher the answers to the last two questions will be for blacks, whites and Western interests. The Reagan Administration, with its policy of friendly persuasion of the white government, called constructive engagement, suffers from terminal myopia—as do its liberal and press critics. They all ignore the increasingly apparent fact that blacks will control the dynamic for change in South Africa. Because the white government is too stubborn to offer the far-reaching reforms that are demanded, it can only slow the pace of change and thus increase the death toll.

Two bases of black resistance have survived, perhaps even benefited from, the present turmoil: the African National Congress (A.N.C.), the exiled liberation group headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia, and the black trade union movement. Both groups have built their strategies on the belief that white South Africa will not be defeated from without; it will crumble from within. Both movements are in a unique position to accelerate the economic collapse, social disorder and white flight that will undermine apartheid.

South Africa's black majority cannot wage a successful guerrilla war or ignite a popular insurrection capable of toppling the regime any time

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EXCHANGE.

A FEMINIST FOR SEARS

New York City

When Jon Wiener asked to interview me for an article on the Sears, Roebuck & Company discrimination case, I did not expect him to be sympathetic but I did expect him to be fair ["Women's History on Trial," Sept. 7]. I was shocked, therefore, to read his biased and inaccurate article. His presentation of my role in the case seriously misrepresented both my motive and the substance of the testimony I gave. And his treatment of the facts showed either ignorance of or disregard for the trial record.

I was prompted to consider testifying in the case when I learned there were no complainants, which I found remarkable in a discrimination case. After reviewing the records, I concluded that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had based its case on a faulty assumption for which there appeared to be no evidence. The commission had assumed that men and women applying for sales positions at Sears were equally interested in commission sales, despite the working conditions and the nature of the products involved. I agreed to give testimony in the belief that it would expose the naïveté of the E.E.O.C. assumption. I never said, as Wiener claims, that history proves women don't want commission sales jobs. I did not say that women do not want good jobs or that the economic disadvantages women suffer are simply a function of their own choices. I certainly never used history as a justification for current instances of employer discrimination against women.

Rather, I used history to explain the roots of women's labor force experience in the 1970s. Touching briefly on early American history but concentrating on the recent past, I said that many factors have gone into shaping the contemporary female labor force, including socialization, family responsibilities, cultural attitudes, educational practices, government policies and employer discrimination. I stated further that because of the multiple factors at work in shaping women's participation in the labor force, statistical disparities alone—which is all the E.E.O.C. presented as evidence—cannot by themselves prove discrimination on the part of the employer.

Most of the historians I know agree with my multicausal view of the past. Many scholars are concerned, however, that in this day of conservative backlash, a public voicing of the multicausal view will be used by conservatives to hurt women. It may be. But if we insist on pretending that no factors other than employer discrimination play a significant role in shaping women's role in the work force, we will do women more harm than good.

The most troubling aspect of this whole trial is that it illustrates the ease with which fidelity to careful scholarship is abandoned in politically troubled times. I have warned elsewhere of the dangers of allowing the concept of women's culture to take on greater significance than the evidence warrants, and all my work has challenged the belief that there is something inherent in women that makes them think or behave differently from men. And yet to argue that women have never failed to accept opportunity when it has been offered and that employer discrimination is the sole explanation for statistical disparities in employment is to foster a myth that will endanger the cause of women's rights long after the Sears case has passed, forgotten, into the law reporters.

Even though I firmly believe that discrimination by employers is only one of many factors shaping the labor force, I would not have testified if I had thought Sears was guilty of discrimination. I believe that the evidence shows not only that Sears was not discriminating against women but that it was successfully recruiting women into nontraditional jobs through a vigorous affirmative action program. Wiener has no obligation to agree with that view, but he does have an obligation to get the facts right and at least present fairly the argument with which he disagrees. He did neither.

The trial began a year ago and lasted ten months, producing more than 20,000 pages of trial transcript and roomfuls of depositions, expert reports and pleadings, the contents of which Wiener seems not to have reviewed. If he had been familiar merely with the transcript, he would have known that Sears's affirmative action program began voluntarily in 1968, not under government pressure in 1973. Since he is mistaken about such a fundamental and easily verifiable fact, one should perhaps not be surprised by what he does with statistics: his 27 percent hiring rate for women in commission sales conveniently neglects part-time female employees (the hiring rate for all women was 37 percent, according to testimony); the 29 percent figure he gives for incumbents in commission sales is true but irrelevant (especially during a recession) in a case having to do with hiring and promotion; etc. Sometimes it is not clear whether his misrepresentations derive from his ignorance of the record or from a fundamental failure to meet the elementary standards of fairness. A reporter writing about a trial must distinguish between facts that are stipulated and allegations that are not. For example, his statement that "40 percent of those qualified for commission sales posts were women" is not an agreed upon "fact" but the allegation of an E.E.O.C. witness, which was hotly contested by a number of other witnesses.

Wiener compounds his errors in his discussion of interviewing, testing, compensation practices and work schedules at Sears. He alleges that Sears had "subjective hiring practices," "no written guidelines" and "no checks on interviewer bias." Apparently he is unaware that the overwhelming majority of Sears interviewers were women and that as part of their training they were instructed to seek women for commission sales jobs as well as other nontraditional jobs. By 1973 the company went so far as to promulgate a mandatory quota system, which required that 50 percent of nontraditional jobs go either to women or to minority males. And by 1975 the hiring rate for women in commission sales had passed 40 percent.

Wiener goes on to credit a few "key questions" on Sears's 140-question hiring test as responsible for identifying "promising commission salespeople." But interviewers did not look at answers to individual questions, only at overall scores; scores were normalized at least as early as 1960 to avoid any prejudicial effect on women; and the scores were disregarded when they stood in the way of filling the 50 percent affirmative action quota. Finally, a point Wiener conspicuously fails to note, the alleged bias in the testing is not even an E.E.O.C. claim in this case.

On the issues of pay and hours, Wiener accepts Alice Kessler-Harris's version of practices at Sears. Kessler-Harris is wrong, however, in stating that commission selling at Sears guaranteed more income than noncommission selling, at no greater risk. She is wrong as well in suggesting that noncommission and commission salespeople have the same obligation to work extended hours, evenings, weekends and out of the store.

For many reasons, not just the two that Wiener seizes on, women were less likely than men either to seek or to accept positions in commission sales. Wiener denies this, but he has no evidence. And faced with hundreds of instances, sworn to at trial, of women who declined offers of work in commission sales, he can do no better than protest that many of these women were not refusing "genuine offers" but were merely indicating "a lack of interest" in commission sales, as if interest in a job is not usually a prerequisite for accepting it. Wiener's quotation of Kessler-Harris that Sears never identified women who turned down offers in commission sales simply reveals that he has examined neither the two volumes of Exhibit 25 nor the trial testimony. The names are there for all to see.

If Sears had systematically discriminated against women, the E.E.O.C. should have been able to find, from among the hundreds of thousands of women employed at Sears, at least one who would testify that she had been discriminated against. That was certainly tried. There was what one judge has called a "massive search for victims." All to no avail. Wiener tries to excuse the failure by claiming that it is "difficult to find com-

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EDITORIALS.

Hijack Backwash

America's double standard of conduct in Middle Eastern affairs is not only morally corrupt; it will also surely be politically self-defeating. However gratifying it is to bring terrorists to justice and to do so without the loss of innocent lives, neither the rule of law nor the interests of peace were served by intercepting an Egyptian airliner carrying terrorists to Tunis and, a week earlier, letting a squadron of Israeli fighter-bombers get through to the same city for lethal ends. A complex military, diplomatic and juridical machine is set in motion to avenge the cold-blooded slaying of an elderly American tourist in the Mediterranean. Day after day newpapers and television broadcasts scream out the story, while barely mentioning the cowardly assassination of Alex Odeh. The leader of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee was killed and seven of his colleagues wounded when a bomb went off in California on October 10.

Yasir Arafat proclaims the P.L.O.'s innocence and peaceful proclivities, blaming the hijacking on renegades, but the full story is not yet known. And, as usual, the moral consistency of the Reagan Administration's opposition to international terrorism must be questioned. It charges Mohammed Abbas, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Front, with "masterminding" the entire operation, yet winks at masterminds Begin and Sharon in Lebanon and Iraq; mastermind Thatcher in the sinking of the Argentine ship General Belgrano; mastermind Botha from Cape Town to

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Lusaka; and mastermind Mitterrand in Auckland harbor. Indeed, what of masterminds Reagan and McFarlane, and their mercenaries in and around Nicaragua? Aggression, secret wars, covert actions are forms of state terrorism, and they should not be judged by more elastic standards than the stateless terrorism of some Palestinians. An antiterrorist policy that is directed only against political and ideological opponents subverts the impartiality that is the essence of law and justice.

The interception of the Egyptian Boeing 737 will do nothing to diminish terrorism and may well precipitate more of it. Terrorists must be brought to justice, but the effect of this particular operation will be the fulfillment of Americans' revenge fantasies rather than the prevention of future attacks. Causing people to "feel good again" makes short-term political sense for President Reagan, but it is bound to make trouble for the rest of us in the longer run.

The danger is that Reagan's famous victory in the skies will be used to create a climate for further conquests on many fronts, domestic and foreign. In the Middle East it will be used to justify a broad political offensive against the P.L.O. at a time when the Middle East peace process has been reset in motion. Important Israeli opinion makers had begun for the first time to argue for direct negotiations with Arafat, which is the sine qua non of serious diplomacy in the region. It is hardly helpful for the United States, which must approve all negotiations, to focus on one party's crimes while ignoring the other's and to increase tensions in the region just as the process gets under way. All weekend Administration officials entertained themselves by calling the Palestinians names. That probably made a lot of people feel good one more time, but more than rhetoric is needed to end the vicious cycle of violence in the Middle East.

For other perspectives on the hijacking, we asked for contributions from Stanley Reed, who has written on Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries in these pages; Milton Viorst, whose articles on Israel's raid near Tunis appeared here last week and who is at work on a book on Israeli-Palestinian relations; and Aryeh Neier, vice chair of the Americas Watch and Helsinki Watch committees.

—The Editors

Punishing Friends

Americans are missing the point when they congratulate themselves on the forcing down of an unarmed Egyptian airliner by F-14 jets of the U.S. Navy. That lawless act served the interests of terrorism more than those of the United States. The same can be said of the recent Israeli air raid on the headquarters of the P.L.O. near Tunis. The real losers in this latest round of the battle against terrorism were not the captured Palestinian hijackers but two important American allies: Tunisia and Egypt.

President Reagan's initial remarks commending the Israeli bombing as a legitimate reprisal for the killing of three Israelis in Cyprus were most embarrassing for the government of President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia. During his nearly thirty years in power Bourguiba has made close cooperation with the United States a tenet of his foreign policy. He supported the American war in Vietnam, and he would not have allowed the P.L.O. to set up shop outside Tunis, which is also the home of the State Department's Foreign Service Institute Arabic Language School, without first obtaining Washington's approval. Bourguiba is one of the few Arab leaders who has taken a consistently conciliatory posture toward Israel. He has also compiled a distinguished record of combating anti-Semitism.

The raid could not have come at a more inopportune time for the Tunisian government, which is grappling with the problem of designating a successor to Bourguiba, who is 82. Libya's Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has added to its sense of insecurity by expelling 25,000 Tunisian workers and by making menacing gestures. The United States has tried to help by pledging to safeguard the country's sovereignty, but in Tunisian eyes the Israeli attack with American-supplied jets made a mockery of such assurances. The United States did recoup some of its lost prestige by not vetoing the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the bombing.

The damage to U.S. relations with Egypt could be more difficult to repair. Although a great deal of provocation, including the senseless murder of an American citizen, preceded the interception of the airliner carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers, Washington may come to regret its hasty response. Because of its preoccupation with terrorism the Reagan Administration overlooked the outstanding achievement of American diplomacy in the Middle East over the past decade: encouraging Egypt, the most powerful Arab country militarily, to renounce its hostility toward Israel. Was the capture of the four gunmen worth humiliating such an important friend? Was there no diplomatic means of achieving an acceptable outcome? Would the Administration have taken comparable action in a dispute with Israel or Great Britain?

Despite President Hosni Mubarak's present fury, it would be premature to predict that the Camp David peace agreement between Egypt and Israel is about to go up in smoke. At a time when Egypt is falling behind on its debt payments, Mubarak would hesitate to forfeit the $2.3 billion in economic and military assistance the United States provides each year. However, his rejection of U.S. requests concerning the disposal of the hijackers and his lying to American officials about their whereabouts reveal that something was wrong in relations between the two countries. Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar el-Sadat, probably would have followed the U.S. Embassy's instructions in a similar situation, but the perception in Egypt that Sadat catered too much to American interests contributed to his demise. Mubarak evidently decided that he had more to lose by defying the Palestinians than by defying Washington. In all probability he made a mistake. He has already paid for it by being humbled by his American patron, and he may pay more in lost American aid.

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Even before the Achille Lauro debacle, Egyptian-American relations were strained. The Egyptians are frustrated by the lack of progress in the peace process, their continued isolation in the Arab world and the weakness of their economy. They contend that they have taken far greater risks for the sake of peace than have the Israelis, and so they resent the Reagan Administration's increasingly pronounced tilt toward Israel in both economic and military matters. In short, Cairo is in a recriminatory mood, and Washington is a logical scapegoat. The forcing down of the Egyptian plane has encouraged this sentiment. The opposition press is fanning public anger by proclaiming that the United States has finally revealed its contempt for Egypt.

The damage to American prestige from the events of this month will not be limited to Egypt and Tunisia. Arab leaders throughout the region now have more reason to doubt the credibility of the United States as either a protector or a mediator. All this adds up to a great victory not for the Reagan Administration but for the extremists, both Arab and Israeli, who oppose efforts to widen the peace process. Thus, Americans' bragging to the contrary, the Reagan Administration has in effect given in to terrorism. How else does one describe its risking valuable, longstanding relationships for the short-lived satisfaction of revenge?

STANLEY REED

Is Peace a Victim?

Let's stipulate that President Reagan performed a service to international law enforcement by nabbing the four thugs currently sitting in an Italian jail for hijacking the Achille Lauro. Judging from the public response, he also gratified a deep-seated need among Americans to *do something* about terrorism. As *The New York Times* so nicely put it in a page 1 headline, he satisfied the "cries for blood." But did he do anything else?

The President boasted he had sent a message to terrorists everywhere that "you can run, but you can't hide." He seemed to be suggesting that he had found a formula that would put an end to hijacking, though, to his credit, he tempered the bombast with a reminder that the United States has not yet learned how to deal with terrorists whose identity cannot be established, much less with those on suicide missions. But time will show he has set back the fight against terrorism. His handling of the Achille Lauro affair ruptured an international consensus by which authorities with diverse policies cooperate to save lives threatened by terror.

The United States did not save the lives of the passengers and crew of the cruise ship, any more than it rescued the passengers aboard the Trans World Airlines jet in Beirut in June. The Egyptian government played the key role in the return of the ship, apparently with the help of the Italian government, which brought in the P.L.O. to negotiate. Similarly, the Syrian government freed the T.W.A. plane, with the aid of the Shiite leadership in Lebanon. In each case, an American was murdered prior to the rescue. Without the intercession of foreign authorities, however, there would have been many more killings.

In both hijackings, a deal was made that permitted the culprits to go free. America thanked the Syrians and the Shiites for their services in the T.W.A. case, then resumed its previous hostile stance to them both. In the case of the Achille Lauro, Reagan complained from the start about Egypt's promise of safe passage, though it was posturing to suggest that, with 400 lives at stake, he would have handled it differently. Forcing down the plane en route to the hijackers' asylum, which Egypt charged was piracy, was a gratuitous insult to President Hosni Mubarak. Reagan then offended the Italians by criticizing their release of the P.L.O. leader who helped negotiate the agreement. Finally, he has dealt with the main wing of the P.L.O. as if it had committed the crime—an accusation not proved—rather than having assisted in its resolution.

The message for friend and foe alike is clear: Mind your business. Let the Americans extract their own chestnuts.

What Reagan obviously has not done is to ask himself why these incidents of terrorism are happening and why they are increasingly directed at Americans. If the four thugs who took the Achille Lauro had been arrested for mugging in the subway, we would try to understand why they did it. Knowing would not make them less culpable, but it would help us in creating an environment in which such crimes are less likely to be repeated.

Hijacking the Achille Lauro was a political crime. Political murder is as heinous as murdering for money. Apprehending the guilty, though desirable in itself, does not help us understand the cause of the crime. We must look for its explanation in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which Reagan chose not to do.

The current round of violence began at Larnaca, the port in Cyprus where three Israelis were murdered a few weeks ago. Israel charged that the P.L.O. had killed innocent civilians, a crime that has many precedents. Some Arabs replied that the Israelis were secret agents, a claim that is not implausible. The P.L.O. said that whatever the three were, it did not kill them. Nonetheless, Israel retaliated by bombing P.L.O. headquarters near Tunis, killing some sixty Palestinians and Tunisians. Were they all terrorists, or can we assume some were innocent civilians?

Reagan had no doubts about the answer to that question. He proclaimed that the raid was "legitimate." Without hearing the evidence on either side, he accepted the Israeli justification and decided the Arabs were lying. But suppose it was the other way around. Israel would not be the first sovereign state that has lied to cover itself. If terrorism is the use of violence against innocent civilians to attain political ends, who is the terrorist? Or don't Arabs ever count as innocent civilians?

The bombing near Tunis prompts us to ask whether the U.S. Sixth Fleet's radar picked up the Israeli planes while they were en route. If not, what are all those ships doing out there? If it did, why didn't the fleet's commander challenge the mission? The story circulating in Washington

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is that Reagan warned the Israelis not to bomb Amman because he is trying to improve relations with King Hussein, but imposed no other limitations. If that is true, would Reagan be an accomplice to all those deaths?

Israel asks disingenuously why President Mubarak and King Hussein are so upset about the raid near Tunis. It suggests that their rancor proves that the Arab states are looking for excuses to retreat from peace. But the broad license the United States has granted Israel to attack Arabs—remember Baghdad and Lebanon—has left the Arabs feeling impotent and ashamed. The applause at the dock in Port Said as the four hijackers came down the gangplank of the Achille Lauro did not mean Egyptians are uncivilized. To the Arab in the marketplace, the four had struck a blow for Arab self-respect. Mubarak was aware of this sentiment in negotiating for the ship's release. He did it to reaffirm his commitment to international order and the peace process. Then, true to form, Reagan kicked him in the teeth.

Ronald Reagan has no obligation to accept Israel's dismissal of the Palestinian issue. As the murder aboard the Achille Lauro illustrates, Americans have an interest in a Middle East settlement even if Israelis and Palestinians often behave as if they have none. The President's handling of the incident will further discourage the peace process, without deterring terrorism. Four thugs may be in jail, which is good, but Reagan seems unable to learn that the politics of the Palestinian issue is what terrorism in the region is all about.

MILTON VIORST

Rules of Law

Under a venerable principle of international law, a pirate is *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of all alike. Because he commits his crime on the high seas, beyond the jurisdiction of any particular country, there is universal jurisdiction to apprehend him and to judge him.

Even though the Reagan Administration may not have invoked that principle in apprehending the four Palestinians who hijacked the Achille Lauro, held 400 people hostage and apparently murdered an elderly tourist, it acted in fidelity to it. Moreover, by turning the hijackers over to the courts instead of shooting down the plane, the Administration took the proper steps to insure that due process would prevail and that the innocent passengers on the plane would not suffer.

The episode shows that complying with the law does not leave the United States helpless in dealing with terrorists. Although the opportunities for legal reprisal will not ordinarily present themselves so quickly and so dramatically, lawful means can work. Moreover, they inspire respect and admiration—for the United States and for the law.

Unfortunately, in rushing to free Palestine Liberation Front leader Mohammed Abbas without waiting to consider evidence that purportedly showed he directed the hijacking, the Italian and Yugoslav governments undermined some of the good that was accomplished. Their actions detract from the confidence in the legal process that would have resulted if the case against Abbas had received judicial consideration.

The freeing of Abbas also adds considerably to the prospect that the salutary lesson of the Achille Lauro will not be learned by Washington. The Reagan Administration holds law, and particularly international law, in low regard, as it has demonstrated on a number of occasions, from its objection to U.S. ratification of the 1977 Protocols to the Geneva Conventions to its effort to sabotage the World Court. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the way the White House has dealt with terrorism.

When T.W.A. Flight 847 was hijacked and when the Achille Lauro was hijacked, the President and his associates denounced terrorism immediately and forthrightly. On the other hand, when it was revealed last year that the C.I.A. had prepared a detailed manual of terrorist techniques for the *contras*, the President sought to dismiss the resulting fuss in Congress and the press as "much ado about nothing." When Salvadoran guerrillas assassinated four U.S. Marine guards and nine civilians last June, the President radically increased U.S. military aid to El Salvador and pledged that the killers would be hunted down. When evidence was compiled that *contras* had assassinated hundreds of civilians, the President praised them as "freedom fighters," "our brothers" and "the moral equal of our Founding Fathers."

Even some members of the Reagan Administration ought to have gagged at the reports of what was said at a luncheon discussion of terrorism in Washington on September 25. The participants were Vice President George Bush and the Administration's intellectual guru, former U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. The latter took the occasion to offer her opinion on the French attack on the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, in which, as in the attack on the Achille Lauro, one man was killed: "I'd like to comment on the French, if I may. I'd like to say that the French clearly did not intend to attack civilians and bystanders and maim, torture or kill." Responding to a question about whether she was sanctioning the attack, Kirkpatrick responded: "The question was about terrorism. . . . They did not intend to maim, torture or kill. I think that's a very important distinction, very important."

And what did the Vice President, who heads a task force on terrorism, have to say in response to this remarkable declaration by his luncheon guest? "I'm not going to go into that," the Associated Press quoted him as saying. "You know how it is, you know how it is."

The Reagan Administration's handling of the Achille Lauro episode has been exemplary as of this writing. By and large, it has been low on bombast, and we have been spared pronouncements by the likes of Kirkpatrick. Justifiable pride in its handling of the affair could help to alter the Reagan Administration's hostility toward utilizing the legal process in international affairs. That makes it all the more a shame that other governments acted so cravenly in the Abbas matter, diminishing the impact of the U.S. adherence, this time, to the rule of law.

ARYEH NEIER

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

When that old bully and fraud Randolph Churchill had a growth removed and the hospital authorities announced it was benign, Evelyn Waugh said that it was absurd to excise the only part of the man that was not malignant. I have just heard a venomous attack on New York Mayor Ed Koch, one of my least favorite politicians. But the attacker denounced him for only two things. First, for being Jewish, a condition which sane people consider benign, and, second, for being homosexual, a perfectly benign condition which the Mayor squealingly denies he is in. How odd, not to say sinister, that a speaker should choose these lines of assault on a man who is vulnerable practically everywhere else.

The speaker was Louis Farrakhan, quite a presence in my Washington neighborhood, who on October 7 filled Madison Square Garden with a mixture of the curious, the disaffected and the utterly enraged. The difference between the atmosphere inside and outside the hall was almost hallucinatory. Outside the hall, blacks are largely ignored by what is sometimes called the wider society. The President and his party have no time for them; Reagan himself once forgot the name of his only black Cabinet member. And where blacks are not ignored, they're victims of a Treasury Department whose policies put the rich on welfare, a Justice Department that stirs itself only to dilute affirmative action and the Voting Rights Act, and a State Department that is in bed with apartheid. Inside the hall, however, there were uniformed blacks giving orders, neatly dressed blacks providing security and discipline, and a black leader who talked as if the coming of redemption was both imminent and ordained. I can't help thinking that there must be some connection between the reality and the illusion.

Any speaker who believes in God, the Devil and the Prophets has already advertised his willingness to believe in anything. A speaker who believes that he actually *is* a prophet (and maybe more) is in even more serious trouble. Most of Farrakhan's anti-Jewish utterances arise from repeated comparisons between himself and Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus entered Jerusalem, ancient capital of the Jews, and was reviled and calumniated. Today, "New York is the capital of the Jews"—you can fill in the rest for yourself. More luridly, and showing evidence of a more horrible deliberation: "You can't say 'never again' to God, because when *he* puts you in the ovens you're there forever." Farrakhan liked the effect of that last sally so much that he made it twice. There is, I would think, no means of explaining such a remark away.

Some radicals can't see it, because they believe that a man so harshly denounced must be on to something, but Farrakhan is more a black Reagan than a black Falwell or Kahane. His vision is one of backward, utopian, simple-minded "self-help," a half-assed free enterprise backed up by subsidies to the few. His foreign policy, if that's the name for it, involves constructive engagement with trusty friends like Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Idi Amin and the dubious Pan-African Congress of South Africa, and sticking with them no matter what. Like Reagan, he invokes the memory of dead heroes (Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X) whom he despised and opposed when they were alive. Like Reagan, he knows how to wow an audience by telling cheap, shifty, suggestive anecdotes about "out-groups." He also knows how to include a special segment on the brotherhood of man, to be used as small print in case of need. Above all, he dwells on the most banal and ridiculous aspects of Scripture to conceal the weak points in his program.

Of the two political figures who share the above characteristics, I know which worries me the most. But Farrakhan is the more depressing because he attempts to inspire and console the wretched and the exploited. I.F. Stone once remarked of Mussolini that his affectation of a pseudosocialism was a perverse compliment because nobody would bother to counterfeit a bad currency. That's true as far as it goes. But it is also the reason that fascism is so repulsive and so dangerous. Farrakhan has no claim on the rhetoric of liberation because he is an unabashed reactionary. But as the right has proved again and again, those slogans and emblems can be picked up by anybody once they are discarded by those who should uphold them.

The case for treating Farrakhan with indifference would be extremely strong if there were any sign of an official conscience about black America or of a real commitment by the Democratic leadership. In the absence of these things, and in the presence of black leadership like that of Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode, there is no mystery about the meretricious attraction exerted by a man who proudly says that ordinary standards mean nothing to him.

As the audience at the Garden was drifting into the subway and back to its dreary atomized obscurity, one had to ask what had drawn them to hear a man who can only revile other minority groups and can talk with enthusiasm only about himself. The individuals I approached responded with easy courtesy, but our conversations were fragmented and confused. Provisionally, I'd say that Farrakhan is a symptom of despair and of malign neglect and that it would be a mistake to call his anti-Semitism the socialism of fools or his Islam the opiate of the people. He is the black con artist one might have expected—should have expected—to emerge in the grand new era of show biz, selfishness and superstition.

P.S. In 1984, Farrakhan drew attention to himself by threatening the life of a black reporter, Milton Coleman of *The Washington Post*. Coleman still lives, but Alex Odeh of Santa Ana, California, is dead. He was an American citizen with a leading position in the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, and on October 10 he was murdered on American soil for his political beliefs. Of this crime Irv Rubin of the Jewish Defense League said: "I have no tears for Mr. Odeh. He got exactly what he deserved." The game of denunciation and dissociation may be futile, but those who believe in it had better find something to say about Mr. Odeh—and Mr. Rubin.

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DISPATCHES.

■ AFGHANISTAN: Lost Opportunities

When Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev meet next month in Geneva, the President intends to bludgeon the General Secretary with polemics about the five-year war in Afghanistan. A more diplomatic approach might bring the Russians a lot closer to ending the war. They have long indicated a willingness to work out a timetable for the withdrawal of their 115,000 troops. "I think there is a possibility of a political solution to the Afghan problem," says Selig Harrison, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the author of *In Afghanistan's Shadow*. "But every year that the war goes on it becomes more difficult to achieve one. Time is on the side of the Soviets." The war is not going well for the Mujahedeen, the Moslem fundamentalist guerrillas, even though the C.I.A. has provided them with a reported $250 million in aid this year and Congress just approved an additional $300 million in emergency funds over the next two years. Much of the aid has been siphoned off by assorted C.I.A. intermediaries and Pakistani officials.

So far, every attempt at negotiating a settlement of the war has been aborted by the United States, in a triumph of ideology over compromise. Hard-liners in Washington have been willing to fight the Russians to the last Afghan, presumably to reap the propaganda benefits from a continuing Soviet intervention. Rather than respond to Soviet feelers, they have sabotaged talks that might have resulted in a coalition government and the return of some 3 million Afghan refugees from Pakistan.

In the spring of 1983, the Russians indicated they would agree to a staged withdrawal in return for Pakistan's assurances that the Afghan insurgency would be halted. The Russians even said that President Babrak Karmal, whom they had installed, would be willing to step aside in favor of a transitional figure. They planted no illusions that Afghanistan would be allowed to follow an independent course in its foreign relations.

Pakistan's initial response to the offer was positive. Then in stepped the Reagan Administration. Harrison explains, "Pakistan did not seriously test Soviet terms for a force withdrawal in 1983, losing its heart for diplomatic brinkmanship at the eleventh hour in the face of U.S., Saudi and Chinese disapproval."

Since coming to power, Gorbachev has signaled that he is willing to deal, and sources in the United Nations have blamed the lack of progress on Washington. At a press conference in April, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Deane Hinton said that he was "baffled" by those in Pakistan who were pressing for direct talks with the Karmal regime. A month later, Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo ruled out any kind of bilateral talks.

In an interview in June with Lawrence Lifschultz for the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, a senior Soviet specialist on Afghanistan said, "The option of Finlandization is still possible. It is to be preferred. But, if the Geneva negotiations are obstructed, then Soviet policy will be one of Mongolization." Lifschultz also reported that Gorbachev has told Pakistani dictator Gen. Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq that he is prepared to send 400,000 additional troops into Afghanistan if attempts to negotiate prove futile.

■ CHILE: Banking on Pinochet

A number of Congressionally imposed restrictions ban direct U.S. aid to Chile, as well as U.S. support for assistance by the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank (I.D.B.), because of the regime's dismal human rights record. But the Center for International Policy, a Washington-based group which monitors foreign aid, reports large increases in loans and credits to Chile by the two banks and by two quasi-governmental corporations backed by the U.S. treasury: the Commodity Credit Corporation and the Export-Import Bank.

The C.C.C., which comes under the Agriculture Department's jurisdiction, subsidizes foreign purchases of U.S. foodstuffs. Credit guarantees for exports to Chile have risen from $31 million in fiscal 1983 to $110 million this year. Similarly, the amount of Ex-Im Bank loan guarantees and insurance to U.S. investors doing business in Chile has gone up. During the Carter Administration's last three years in office, the total was $16.8 million. From 1982 through 1984, the Ex-Im Bank exposure increased sevenfold, to $114.4 million, including $11.5 million in direct credits.

But the Reagan Administration primarily underwrites Pinochet's Chile through the multilateral development banks. According to the center's calculations, those institutions provided $208.4 million in loans during the Carter years, and requests for loans worth half a billion dollars were turned down because of U.S. opposition. Since 1981, however, U.S. representatives to the banks have approved loans to Chile 86 percent of the time, and $2.1 billion is in the aid pipeline to Santiago, with another $544 million pending.

The increased aid to Chile stands in marked contrast to U.S. policy on multilateral loans to Nicaragua. The United States has pressured the banks to cut off all further aid to Managua (see "Dispatches," March 2, for a report on the extraordinary U.S. pressure on the I.D.B.). The Center for International Policy has unearthed a confidential World Bank report that bares the shabby *Realpolitik* behind those denials. The 1983 study praises the Sandinista government's dedication to improving the lives of the poor and calls a project to rebuild the bus system and reconstruct the infrastructure and small businesses "probably one of the most effective urban projects supported by the bank." Nicaraguan government teams completed the necessary technical studies "with remarkable speed," achieving within the time allocated more than "twice the quantities of road improvements—paving and drainage." According to the report, "This was due in large part to the commitment of the Government authorities, local municipalities and the *barrio* residents to provide immediate benefits to the poor areas."

The Reagan Administration came into office mistrusting

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foreign aid. By using the banks to subsidize Pinochet's policies while halting aid that demonstrably helps the Nicaraguan poor, the Reagan team has discovered that foreign aid, properly politicized, has its uses after all.

■ PARAGUAY: The Stroessner Connection

Last year Paraguayan customs officials seized ten cargo containers holding sufficient amounts of ether, acetone and hydrochloric acid to refine more than 2.4 metric tons of cocaine. Ordinarily shipments of the chemicals, manufactured in West Germany, pass uneventfully from Brazil to cocaine laboratories in Bolivia, via Paraguay. But U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials, acting on a tip from Paraguayan informants, notified the Interior Ministry about the ten containers and embarrassed the Paraguayan government into seizing them.

The chemicals can refine a quantity of cocaine worth about $500 million on U.S. streets. Thus, they have been the focus of a yearlong struggle between the U.S. Embassy in Asunción, which wants them resold or destroyed, and the regime of President-for-life Alfredo Stroessner, who U.S. authorities believe is tempted to deliver them, at a substantial profit, to cocaine traffickers.

The embassy has offered to defray the cost of destroying the chemicals, and the West German pharmaceutical firm Merck has agreed to buy them back. But the aging dictator—presumably waiting for the highest bid—has stored the chemicals at Paraguay's National Institute of Technology.

U.S. suspicion of Stroessner's motives is fueled by the certainty that high-ranking officials in his regime are deeply involved in the drug traffic. Fittingly, the new U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay, Clyde Taylor, just completed a tour of duty as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. Taylor is expected to continue making the disposition of the seized chemicals a major issue.

Footnote: Taylor's views on human rights are a throwback to the Carter years, and observers who closely follow U.S. Latin America policy believe that he will take public stands on political repression, press censorship and the right of assembly. All of Stroessner's leading political opponents are under house arrest, in prison or in exile, and in March 1984 the President closed *ABC Color*, an opposition newspaper which had the largest circulation in the country. Taylor's appointment resulted from pressures by career Foreign Service officers to put one of their own in an ambassadorial post. Also, as one observer put it, it gave the Administration a cheap way to look good to members of Congress. Human rights, like Paraguay, are to be relegated to a dark, distant corner.

■ SOUTH KOREA: The Big Payoff

Last March a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee was holding one of those familiar hearings on Pentagon waste and fraud when a disclosure caught the staff's attention. Executives of General Dynamics revealed they had paid generous sums to Eung-Yul Yoon, a retired South Korean Air Force general, for "consulting services." Although that was not particularly unusual, the executives could not reasonably explain why the payments, including a check for $220,000, had been deposited in Credit du Nord, a Paris bank.

The subcommittee decided to dig a little deeper. Two investigators were dispatched to Greece to interview P. Takis Veliotis, the former General Dynamics vice president who has been the source of most of the allegations of waste leveled against the troubled company in the past two years. Veliotis, who lives in exile to avoid Federal kickback charges, said that General Yoon was bribing South Korean government officials to award contracts to General Dynamics and that the payments to him were for that purpose. Such a practice would violate the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, passed after a Senate subcommittee headed by the late Frank Church learned that U.S. multinationals regularly bribed foreign governments to get business.

Further digging showed that General Dynamics had paid Yoon and his firm, the Buyeon Company, a total of nearly $2.5 million since 1976. But investigators also discovered that Yoon had served as a consultant for other U.S. arms manufacturers—including General Electric, United Technologies, L.T.V. and Martin Marietta—which had paid him a total of $4 million for his services since 1973. Most of those funds were funneled to banks in Dallas, New York or Paris. The Buyeon Company reportedly understated its revenues by 50 percent in any given year, and millions of dollars in payments to Yoon are so far unaccounted for.

On October 2 the subcommittee held another hearing on Yoon's activities. Senior executives from the five U.S. corporations that employed him denied he was a conduit for illegal payments. But Congressional investigator Bruce Chafin discovered a Telex from Yoon to United Technologies requesting the company to deposit money owed him in his Dallas account. "Never advise or communicate to us on your payment status," the Telex said. Prompted by this unusual directive, United Technologies questioned its relationship with Yoon but let the matter drop.

Some of the corporations say that General Yoon was recommended to them by the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. The State Department initially said that its embassies never make such recommendations, but Chafin produced cables documenting this extraordinary endorsement, which the department still has not explained.

The subcommittee, chaired by Representative John Dingell, has now turned its attention to Credit du Nord. With or without the general's cooperation, investigators eventually will gain access to Yoon's account records. They then will be able to establish whether he used corporate payments to bribe government officials. Even if he didn't, Yoon's troubles aren't over. He likely will face charges of violating South Korean currency and tax laws.

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ARTICLES.

LICENSES TO COIN MONEY

The F.C.C.'s Big Giveaway Show

BERNARD D. NOSSITER

It is now clear that the Reagan Administration is neither conservative nor ideological, that it is committed to no coherent set of beliefs. It is, instead, devoted to lawless clientelism, serving the prejudices and interests of the lesser businessmen with whom it consorts: automobile dealers, savings and loan executives, oil speculators. Look at the Federal Communications Commission. It was created in 1934 to bring order out of chaos, to assign wavelengths to each radio station and fix its signal strength. Without such a policeman on a limited spectrum, competing stations would interfere with one another's transmissions and audiences would receive a babel of voices and, in a later age, pictures. In return for giving broadcasters exclusive use of a portion of the public domain, Congress ordered that they be licensed by the F.C.C. in the "public convenience, interest or necessity." In effect, Congress offered licensees a valuable monopoly if they would provide programs that served the public welfare.

It is this bargain that Reagan's F.C.C. has torn up. The commission has junked Congress's 1934 mandate. Indeed, it has gone further, reversing a Supreme Court ruling that "the right of the viewers and the listeners, not the right of the broadcasters . . . is paramount," and enriching the owners of radio and television stations by scrapping the regulations designed to make broadcasters public trustees. The commission's engaging chair, Mark S. Fowler, is a former lawyer for broadcasters who can expect to resume this lucrative practice when he leaves government. In a recent address to radio and television executives in New York City, Fowler described his revolution with disarming candor: "It was time to move away from thinking about broadcasters as trustees. It was time to treat them the way almost everyone else in society does—that is, as businesses." After all, he said on another occasion, "television is just another appliance. It's a toaster with pictures."

Fowler has abandoned F.C.C. regulations that compelled broadcasters to devote a minimum portion of their air time to news and "public service" programs, a rubric embracing children's shows and public affairs and religious broadcasts, among others. Those rules tended to reduce profits. Now all those programs can be replaced by commercials, for Fowler has also raised the ceiling on the amount of advertising a station may run in each hour of programming.

To strengthen broadcasters' property rights and the capital value of their stations, Congress, at Fowler's urging, has extended the three-year license period to five years for television and seven years for radio. He has protected owners whose licenses are about to expire from challenges by groups promising better service to the public, by abolishing the log-keeping requirement that enables their programming to be evaluated, and he boasts that he has reduced the renewal application to the size of a postcard. He even tried to make it possible for one giant firm to own every station in the country, by removing the limit on the number of stations a company could own, but even Congress thought that was too much. He did succeed in raising the limit, however. Until Fowler came along, one firm could own no more than five television stations on the very high frequency band—channels 2 through 13, which have the strongest signal—and seven AM and seven FM radio stations. Now the ceiling for all three is twelve, touching off a brisk business in mergers and sales and shrinking the number of voices heard in the land.

Fowler has done all this in the name of the "free market" and is widely regarded in Washington as an ideologue. In fact, he is a far more practical servant of broadcaster interests than his language suggests. A genuine believer in open markets would remove all barriers to new competitors, but Fowler has declined to enlarge the number of radio stations by reducing the width of the frequency each is assigned. That would impose excessive equipment costs on the present owners, he explained. He could insert more television channels on the VHF band, but he has not done so. He has, however, expanded the FM radio band and licensed low-power television stations with a signal of limited range. Both are patchwork moves to bring deeds somewhat closer to words.

Perhaps the widest breach between Fowler's rhetoric and his actions is in the sensitive area of broadcast content. He jettisoned the rules governing ads, news and public service saying they interfered with the owners' freedom of speech. But speaking before an industry gathering in Las Vegas, he forgot his First Amendment concerns. He rebuked a network news show that had suggested Ronald Reagan did not strain himself in the Presidency. "Get it right," he warned the executives. Given his power over their profits, he can expect a more respectful treatment of Reagan in the future.

If Fowler was a genuine believer in competitive enterprise, he might have sought the abolition of the commission itself, enabling entrepreneurs to broadcast anywhere anytime. Let competition eliminate the resultant static. But that would undermine the pecuniary values the F.C.C. has created for its clients, so Fowler has retained that part of the law that serves broadcasters—allocation of frequencies—and erased the profit-reducing clause commanding public service.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld Fowler's coup, largely by seeing what is not there and ignoring what is. In the 1983 case *United Church of*

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Christ v. Federal Communications Commission the Court said that Fowler's deregulation merely gives broadcasters more discretion. They must still air programs in the public interest because Fowler told them they must conduct "discussions of issues of importance to the public." That vague injunction enabled the judges to believe Fowler obeys the 1934 law. They refused, however, to believe that Fowler meant it when he said he had scrapped the rule requiring stations to make public their daily programming logs. Such an action, the judges wisely observed, would prevent anyone from determining whether broadcasters had met their public service obligations.

The court was innocent. The logs have indeed been abandoned. Why require scorecards, the F.C.C. argues, if there is no score to be kept? The judges did inject one breath of reality. They said, "The commission's statements are often misleading and contradictory," an astonishing rebuke for any government agency. The law-breaching Fowler had his sins washed clean, though, thanks to an empty phrase about "discussions." The Court might have done better if it had heeded John Mitchell's dictum, "Watch what I do, not what I say."

In his effort to free the airwaves for more *Dallas* and rock music, Fowler has even tried to abolish the fairness doctrine, which compels broadcasters to give political candidates an opportunity for equal air time and provide a balanced discussion of public issues. But members of Congress feared that an end to the doctrine might make them targets of unanswered attacks by the more politically involved station owners, and refused to abolish the rule.

On the whole, Fowler's virtual repeal of the 1934 law and his easing of limits on station ownership have yielded a golden harvest. According to *Broadcasting*, the average price of a television station doubled between 1982 and 1984, from $12 million to $24 million. Averages, moreover, conceal the giddy peaks reached in major markets. A Los Angeles station was sold this year for more than $500 million. These values are rents, created by the assignment of exclusive broadcast rights. Traffic in stations reaches new highs each year, and mergers and takeovers dominate the industry. Capital Cities Communications absorbs ABC; Rupert Murdoch buys Metromedia; CBS thwarts Ted Turner but only by plunging deep into a debt serviced by heavy cuts in the news department. In 1983 and 1984, the prices paid for all stations sold totaled $5 billion, nearly 60 percent higher than the $3.1 billion figure for 1981 and 1982. The total for this year alone is likely to exceed the record for the previous two years. Raising the ceiling on station ownership, securing broadcasters' licenses and freeing the airwaves for commercials has had a tonic effect on profits and capital gains.

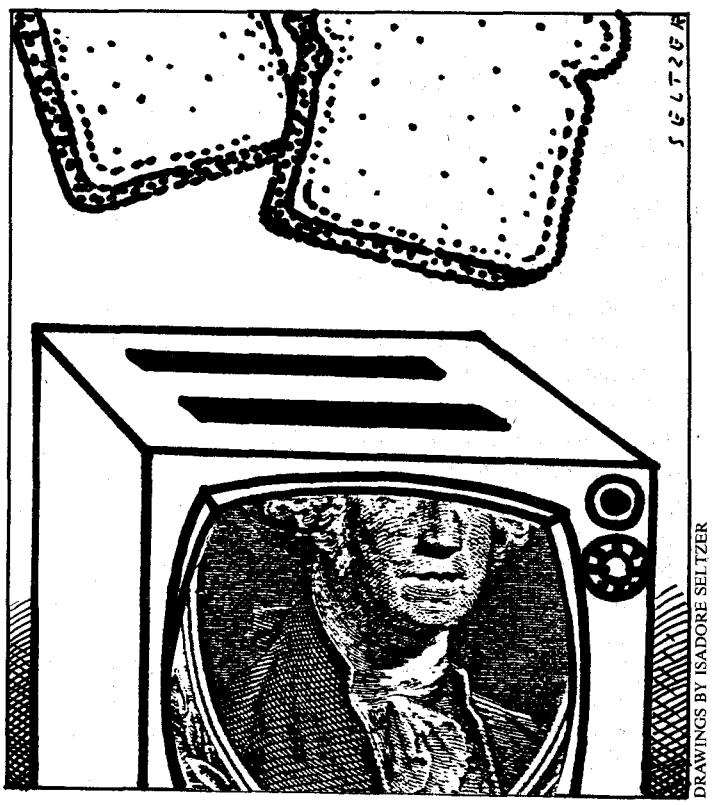
The consequences for what goes out on the air are harder to measure, particularly in the absence of the daily logs. But a survey of news directors made before television was deregulated found that public affairs programs in radio had been cut by about one-fourth in the most populous cities. Judges of the Peabody Awards, the most prestigious in broadcasting, have noted a sharp drop in entries generally and public service competitors in particular. Les Brown, editor of *Channels*, has drawn the lesson. If broadcasters need not meet a public interest standard to keep their licenses, they won't seek a Peabody medal. As for children's programs, Fowler has said bluntly they are a task for public broadcasting and, anyway, they take youngsters away from their parents. So the airwaves are filled with cartoon-commercials that spur juvenile consumption.

"I have no intention of trying to defend the television industry," Fowler has said. "It's no wonder that the medium often reflects medium," meaning mediocre. Anyway, "television is not the world or the most important thing in our world."

He says repeatedly, "Let the public interest determine the public interest," meaning that popularity ratings are the best index of what serves the public interest. The profit motive will insure that most viewers will get what they want much of the time. After all, there are more than 9,800 radio stations and more than 1,500 television stations. That offers market choice; the consumer is king.

That, of course, is special pleading, far removed from economic or common sense. No listener can dial 9,800 radio stations or receive 1,500 television channels. The relevant market is local, the number of stations in Dubuque, Spokane, Mobile or New York. The number of competitors is a small fraction of the national universe, a handful or a few handfuls.

In Fowler's world, all markets are equal. A city with three television stations enjoys the same luxury of choice as one with twelve or, if it were possible, 1,000. Elementary economics tells us that the classically competitive market allows unlimited entry, produces a homogeneous product and has no entrepreneur or group of entrepreneurs large



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enough to influence price or quality. Fowler would have us believe that WCBS-TV in New York has no more economic power, no more control of product, than the wheat farmer on 200 acres. In fact, broadcast markets are imperfectly competitive—they are oligopolies. Moreover, they are tainted with a monopolistic strain, the exclusive right to one segment of the airwaves. It is these characteristics, derived from physics and enforced by government, that justify a demand for broadcasting in the public interest.

Lawyer Fowler argues that the First Amendment guarantees his clients' right to broadcast what they please. He and Reagan both contend that station owners should enjoy the same privileges as publishers. Their analogy is false. Anyone (with enough money) can publish a newspaper. There are no natural barriers to entry. The less well-heeled can publish their views in a shoppers' throwaway, a duplicated broadsheet or a handbill. Their publication does not infringe on the clear expression of others. But broadcasters enjoy their earnings and capital gains only because the government protects their license to a portion of the radio spectrum.

For all his clientelism and calls for deregulation, Fowler has raised a disturbing issue for those concerned with the role of government in the media. Do we want unelected officials determining how air time is allocated? What if the next F.C.C. chair is a Falwell fundamentalist? Or an ex-general or C.I.A. executive disturbed about what he believes is a lack of patriotism? He may set public interest standards that force broadcasters to ride his hobbyhorse. How does one determine what is the proper share of time for ads, news, religious broadcasts and other public service matter?

In his early days at the F.C.C., Fowler offered an answer, although he quickly backed off when the broadcasting industry objected. He proposed that license holders pay a user's fee based on their slice of sales or profits. The money would finance a strong public broadcasting system, perhaps two networks instead of one. Public service programming would then be secure from a hostile Administration or an indifferent Congress. The commercial broadcasters could then fill their portion of the airwaves with *TV's Bloopers and Practical Jokes*, the Top Forty or endless ads. They would serve the public interest by yielding some of their publicly created rents for the dramas, documentaries, films and public affairs programs they now find so unrewarding.

These programs are public goods, like libraries, museums or even defense. Society wants them, but no market is likely to supply them. Taxing commercial broadcasters for their production would provide a plausible escape from the arbitrary rules of Federal bureaucrats. The notion has won support from such distinguished students of broadcasting as Henry Geller, the former general counsel to the F.C.C., and Tim Wirth, chair of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Finance. In the current climate, user's fees would confound the larger goal, enriching station owners, but another and less lawless Administration, abetted by a less complaisant Congress, may yet conclude that the best response to the Fowler era is the establishment of a strong public broadcasting system financed by its commercial brethren. □

GLAFKO SUMS UP

The Old Words, A New Resonance

PETER MARIN

It's Glafko's day in court. He is one of the demonstrators who sat in last June in Santa Barbara, California, at Representative Robert Lagomarsino's office. They were protesting the House vote that day authorizing aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

Glafko and the others were arrested and jailed on trespassing charges. Some of the protesters pleaded nolo contendere and paid the small fines levied against them. Others, determined to raise the larger issues of First Amendment rights and international law, hired lawyers to fight their cases in court. But Glafko chose a third course. He decided to defend himself—not to prove his innocence but simply to have a chance to explain to a jury why he did what he did, and why civil disobedience and resistance to the government are so important in America.

Today was to have been the day of the trial. Several of Glafko's fellow protesters show up to see it. But there is a snafu. The District Attorney's office apparently has forgotten about the case and has neglected to send a prosecuting attorney or witnesses to the courtroom. The D.A.'s office is about to ask for a postponement, but when Glafko explains he wants a trial so that he can have his say, the presiding judge makes him an offer: if he will plead guilty and waive a jury trial, the judge will allow him to address the group of fifty or so men and women summoned for jury duty that day.

So here we are. It is midmorning. The jury panel has been called into courtroom 5, settling down in their chairs with perplexed and worried looks on their faces. They don't know what is going on. But now the judge is explaining perfunctorily who Glafko is and why they are here. And now, on the witness stand, bending close to the gooseneck mike, Glafko is getting ready to speak.

Glafko is an extraordinary man. He is in his middle 70s—stooped, wiry, energetic, sandals on his feet, his sparse graying hair held in place by the string to which his glasses are attached. He was in his 20s when he came to America from Greece, and in the 1930s he was a dedicated leftist. But after the purges and the Moscow-Berlin pact he withdrew from politics and went into business. When he retired, a few years ago, he became active again, this time as a radical pacifist-anarchist, in the mold of Leo Tolstoy or A.J. Muste. In the past several years he has been arrested many times for civil disobedience, mainly while participating in antinuclear or peace demonstrations.

There is something almost saintly, *almost*, about him—

Peter Marin, who writes frequently on Latin American affairs, was arrested at the sit-in at Representative Lagomarsino's office in June.

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nothing ethereal or holy, but a quality rooted in the steadfastness of his nature and the apparently guileless purity of his devotion to the ideals of peace, justice and simple decency. He makes you feel good simply by being around; you find yourself thinking better of your species.

But he is not much of a speaker. His hearing is not too good, and his eyes are no good, and now, on the stand, he cannot read the notes he has been making all week. He is nervous.

So he hesitates, clears his throat, and pauses and clears his throat again, and hesitates some more, and now, finally, the words begin, slowly, in clusters, fading in and out like a shortwave radio tuned to a distant, failing station: *Third World, exploitation, capitalism, agribusiness*. Then there is a pause, silence, some static and another set of words drifting toward us from the distance: *ecology, nuclear winter, justice*. Then silence again, the universe buzzing in our ears, and then more words: *colonialism, oppression, militarism, conscience*.

Then he is done. "That's all," says Glafko, with frustration. "I know I haven't said it clearly, the way I wanted to. But it is all connected, you understand. That is what I want to say."

A woman behind me, one of the members of the jury panel, leans over to the woman next to her and whispers: "Was he arrested or something? I don't get it. I haven't understood a single word."

There is something absurd, almost comic, about the contrast between the gravity of the issues at stake and the actual scene. Here we are, dead serious about ourselves, having dreamed of defending our cause in court, of bringing the jury to its feet applauding, of turning the world against war by our eloquence; and here, instead, is Glafko, and the judge, and the jury, and these words drifting in the air, as incomprehensible as hieroglyphics.

And yet, it is more than comic. It is moving, too. As the jury files from the room, more perplexed than ever, people come over to shake Glafko's hand. "Good work," says one. "I want you to know I'm with you." And another: "I disagree, but I think it's great. You keep it up, you hear?" Later we learn that two of the jurors spent all afternoon in a corner of the jury room discussing what Glafko had to say.

Comic it may have been, but it was not lost. "I'm sorry," says Glafko outside the courtroom. "I'm such an old duffer when it comes to speaking." Perhaps he is. But perhaps we have had too much of eloquence and ringing phrases and the rhetoric of virtue. Perhaps this is the way value passes from one man to others: haltingly, bit by little bit, in increments so small one hardly notices. Glafko's words, taken superficially, might seem like catch phrases or slogans. But given the nature of his devotion and his nature as a man, they did not have the shrill or empty sound they might have had in other mouths. One had the feeling they had been assimilated, *lived*, and so they resonated with a curious ring, sounding, as they drifted through space, as if they had been whispered, far off, by the stars themselves. □

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South Africa

(Continued From Front Cover)

soon. Blacks may greatly outnumber whites, but the lightly armed guerrillas of the outlawed A.N.C. are no match for a white minority protected by 45,000 police, 85,000 soldiers, hundreds of thousands of trained reservists and a $3 billion defense budget. In addition, there are three registered guns for every white person. For now, the violence has been limited to the townships, and its targets have been other blacks, which follows A.N.C. strategy.

Last winter, months before the townships erupted, leading A.N.C. military and political strategists outlined their plans to us during interviews in New York, Lusaka and Morogoro, Tanzania. They told us the group would soon shift from its decade-old strategy of "armed propaganda," which stressed sabotage against economic targets, to a "people's war" aimed at turning the townships into "no-go areas" for white authority. The first step would be to make the urban townships and later the rural homelands ungovernable by attacking black police officers and administrators who refuse to resign.

While the mainstream media have fed the American public a steady diet of reports about random rioting and "black against black" violence, they have missed the pattern and purpose of the unrest. Since early 1984 radical organizers have been systematically exploiting mass anger over rent and school-fee increases in order to destroy the black local authorities which Pretoria had set up to administer apartheid. This campaign laid the groundwork for the townships' explosion this summer into violent attacks against these authorities. Even Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu muted his criticism of assaults on blacks accused of collaboration in July, after he was roundly booed for such comments at a funeral for fifteen black youths in Kwa-Thema.

"We respect Tutu's stance on nonviolence, but it's not a question of black killing black, as if it were purposeless," said Chris Hani, the political commissar and third-ranking officer of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the A.N.C.'s military wing. "The process of rendering the townships ungovernable revolves around making life difficult for black collaborators. The machinery of apartheid cannot function without the collaboration of blacks."

Alfred Nzo, the A.N.C.'s Secretary General and second-ranking official, told us last December that the A.N.C. had calculated that the unrest accompanying the ungovernability

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Mike Calabrese returned from South Africa in August after eight months of writing about African politics and working on human rights law cases at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg. The Stanford University Chapel helped fund his work. Mike Kendall, who has worked in Africa as a journalist, is an American lawyer who spent last fall at the Legal Resources Centre, South Africa's first public interest law firm. He was supported in part by a grant from Harvard Law School.

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campaign would provoke harsh repression by the regime. It came in July, when Pretoria imposed a state of emergency. Nzo expected that the crackdown would divide the white population by driving the moderates and English-speaking capitalists away from the *verkramptes*, the reactionaries. Last month leading English-speaking South African businessmen defied the government and met with A.N.C. leaders at a game lodge in Zambia. He also expected that the crackdown would increase domestic pressure on the U.S. and British governments to abandon constructive engagement. "The more repression there is, the more powerful our struggle will grow," he said.

Founded in 1912, the A.N.C. seeks to overthrow apartheid and establish a democratic, nonracial state with a form of socialism vaguely outlined in the organization's thirty-year-old Freedom Charter. That document calls for one person, one vote; redistribution of land to those who work it; and nationalization of the mines and monopoly industries.

For more than four decades the A.N.C. pursued a policy of nonviolent protest, inspired in part by Mohandas K. Gandhi's passive resistance campaign for Indian rights in South Africa. The regime banned the A.N.C. in 1960 and imprisoned its top leaders. The group's leader, Nelson Mandela, has since become a symbol of black nationalism and hope; his former law partner, Oliver Tambo, who escaped arrest, now serves as acting president. The other top A.N.C. leaders of Mandela's generation languish with him in Pollsmoor Prison, outside of Cape Town.

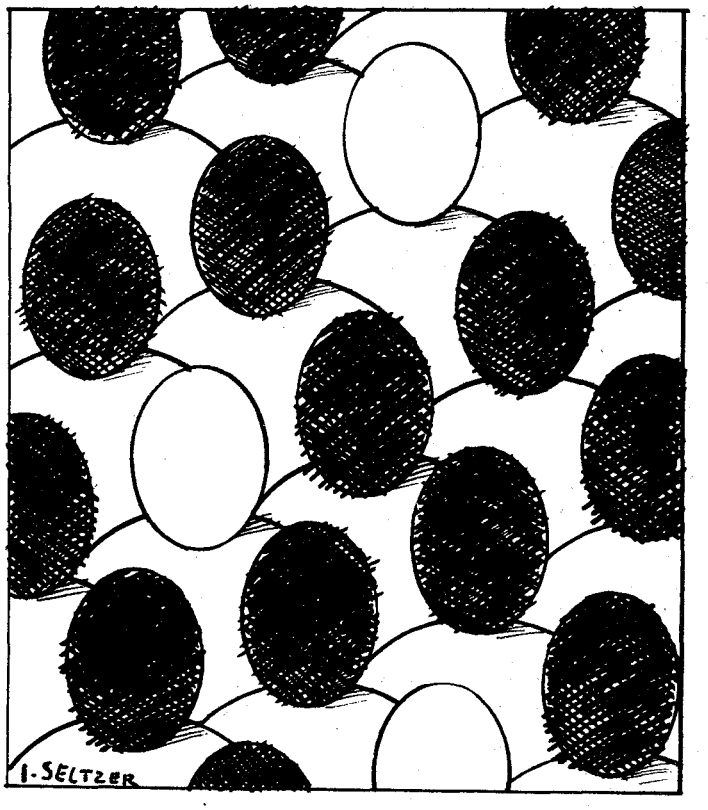
"The reality that all of us must accept is that the A.N.C. is the strongest black organization in South Africa. Their popularity runs at around 80 percent," says Percy Qoboza, editor of *City Press*, the country's most popular black newspaper and a moderate who is often criticized by blacks for his outspoken opposition to armed struggle and disinvestment. The most popular legal black political organization, the 1.5 million-member United Democratic Front, is led primarily by former A.N.C. activists; its 600 youth and community groups have endorsed the Freedom Charter.

The township violence clearly is the product of mass discontent and is not a tightly controlled program orchestrated by the A.N.C. The white government inflates the significance of the liberation group in precipitating the current strife to deflate the role of popular resistance to its policies. Nevertheless, the A.N.C.'s presence is pervasive, mobilizing townships with inspiration and organization. Its strategy reacts to popular discontent as much as it creates it. According to A.N.C. leaders, thousands of blacks who fled South Africa in the past decade have received political and military training in countries as nearby as Angola and as far away as Cuba and the Soviet Union. These guerrillas return and blend into the townships, where they organize cells and incite attacks on collaborators. At funerals, which provide one of the few opportunities for mass protests, the black, green and gold A.N.C. flag covers every coffin. The A.N.C.'s Radio Freedom regularly broadcasts into South Africa, with news and exhortations about the ungovernability campaign. The broadcasts help blacks overcome their disorganization by communicating news of resistance and interpreting "random acts" as part of the ungovernability strategy.

What is so surprising about this combination of A.N.C. strategy and popular turmoil is that it shook white confidence before the A.N.C. had launched the second stage of its campaign: killing South African security personnel. The ungovernability campaign and the state of emergency have brought greater numbers of policemen and soldiers into the townships, and the A.N.C. plans to target them. The unrest has caused only a few white casualties so far. Guerrilla leaders now hope to bleed white resolve by killing the sons and friends of the white families who live so well under apartheid. A.N.C. leaders say they will be less circumspect about civilian casualties when seeking out targets for military raids than they have been in the past. Although not specifically targeting civilians, the A.N.C. is now urging blacks to take the "struggle" into white areas. The current level of repression and the hundreds of black deaths accompanying it represent the government's response to black protests without white casualties. When white policemen start dying, the government assuredly will escalate the violence.

White South Africans talk bravely about encircling the covered wagons in a defensive *laager* and fighting off the Bantus, as their ancestors did more than one hundred years ago. South Africa, however, is no longer a society of rugged individualists farming the veld. Demographic projections show that the black population will double in fifteen years, while the white population will grow older and probably smaller. Already, whites are in a six-to-one minority. Militarily they can beat back black radicals for years to come, but economically they are weak.

Pretoria and the White House fear that meaningful eco-



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nomic sanctions by the U.S. government would have a domino effect on investor confidence and the ability of other Western governments to resist domestic pressures for sanctions. Shielded by subsidies, regulated by a paternalistic government and controlled by a few conglomerates with interlocking directorates, South Africa's economy is surprisingly vulnerable. Like most Third World economies, South Africa's depends on mining and agriculture, not manufacturing. The country also faces the pervasive Third World problem of being unable to pay the principal on its $22 billion foreign debt.

Most critics of apartheid agree that its political demise will be preceded by its economic defeat. Thus, the A.N.C., trade unionists and other black organizations regard economic sanctions as a litmus test of the West's opposition to apartheid. Economic sanctions would have varying levels of impact. They could freeze foreign investment, something the township violence has started to do; force multinationals to sell assets and curtail trade, which is gradually happening as a result of the country's political uncertainty; and impose trade boycotts that deny the country desperately needed technology and credit.

From the Reagan White House to the Johannesburg mansion of "liberal" businessman Harry Oppenheimer, the arguments against economic sanctions reveal misconceptions about the objectives and potency of black opposition. Critics say sanctions will not work because violators will buy assets at fire-sale prices from departing companies and sell embargoed products to South Africa through middlemen. A.N.C. and union leaders say sanctions do not have to work to succeed, as long as they place additional burdens on an already weakened economy and demonstrate Western solidarity with black aspirations. Critics also say sanctions will harden the white government's resolve. What doesn't? Finally, they correctly point out that an expanding economy offers blacks significant material and educational opportunities. Twenty years ago that might have satisfied the majority of blacks. The townships have exploded today because blacks want to abolish South Africa's exploitative political and economic structures, not reform them.

A poll conducted recently by *The Times* of London found that 77 percent of the blacks questioned favored some form of sanctions. Blacks do not fear the impact of disinvestment as much as Ronald Reagan claims. A black worker at the Goodyear plant in Uitenhage told us he preferred to see his employer leave even though he would lose his high-paying job ($40 a week). Which is better, he asked, to pull an aching tooth quickly or slowly? The Sullivan Principles, the rules American businesses adopted to desegregate their workplaces and demonstrate good corporate citizenship, are so mild as to be irrelevant to today's black demands.

As important as economic sanctions may be, black militants readily acknowledge that the economy's weakest point is its very foundation: restive black labor. The regime tried to co-opt the labor movement when it legalized black unions, in 1979. It hoped the move would stymie the growth of illegal unions and make it easier for businesses to deal with their workers.

The unions now have members in such key industries as mining, food processing and metals. Next month unions representing more than 300,000 workers will form a unity federation to coordinate labor action. Unions are the first truly national black organizations with members and leaders drawn from the masses. They tread a fine line, calling strikes and job actions but avoiding direct political challenges to the government. Chris Dlamini, president of the Federation of South African Trade Unions, citing Solidarity's experience in Poland, notes: "Our philosophy has been that it's better to build your base. Attacking political issues before you are strong only leads to your being crushed."

Although more cautious than some blacks would like, the unions have the potential to destabilize the government. Clive Thompson, one of South Africa's leading union lawyers, predicts: "By 1990 the mining and metals sectors will be thoroughly and militantly unionized. . . . Then you'll have a credible threat in terms of coordinated mass industrial action."

Historically, black protest in South Africa has been cyclical. Each time resistance crescendos, the government breaks it with repression. The next cycle occurs, and the government's opponents reappear, more militant than before and with wider grass-roots support. This recurrent stifling of peaceful protest always results in violence.

In the 1950s and 1960s the government broke the Congress movement, which was composed of nonviolent groups led by lawyers, doctors and businessmen. Some of those men, such as Nelson Mandela, have spent the ensuing decades in prison. Others escaped into exile with the suppressed South African Communist Party and started the A.N.C.'s guerrilla resistance. Students rebelled in 1976 and, when crushed, fled by the thousands to the A.N.C. camps in Angola, reviving the group's military efforts. Now it is the United Democratic Front's turn to see its leadership on trial or mysteriously murdered. As long as the government controls the greatest number of guns, it prefers to keep the debate violent.

In all likelihood the popular unrest in South Africa today will also subside, as government repression takes its toll. But union and A.N.C. leaders say the current cycle has pointed out the path they must follow in the next one. By then they expect that economic sanctions, emigration and capital flight will have softened up the economy. Sustained consumer boycotts and township chaos will further weaken the economy. According to the leaders, the big difference next time will be the unions' ability and willingness to carry out strikes and cripple industry. Under such pressure the South African economy will collapse.

Strengthened by their numbers and, strangely enough, fortified by the sheer hopelessness of their present life, blacks can absorb more violence and economic hardship than whites. Like Rocky Marciano, they expect to win the fight by taking more punches than the opposition, not throwing them.

Many South African moderates argue that significant economic sanctions offer the best hope for avoiding the vio-

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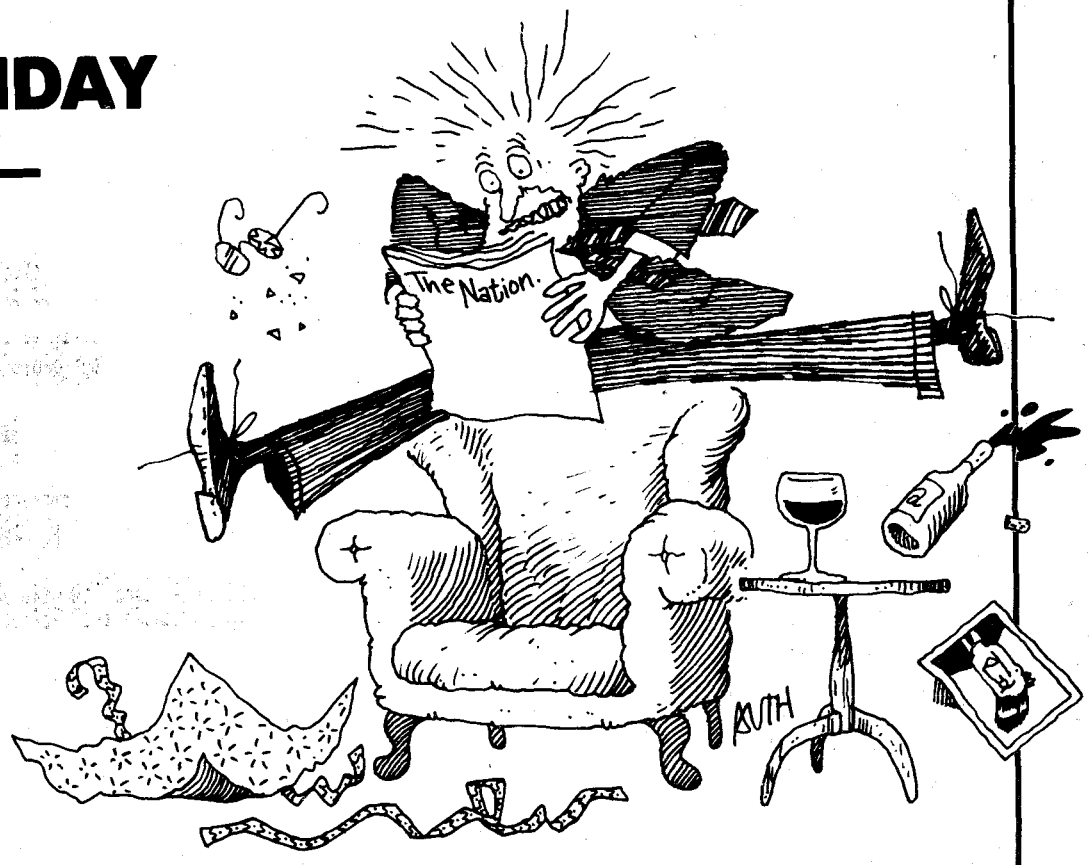

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lent revolution the Reagan Administration professes to oppose. Yet the White House's intransigence on economic sanctions furthers the self-fulfilling prophecy that black radicals are committed to violence and hostile to American interests.

Most opponents of apartheid say that both the violence of the A.N.C. and the economic power of the unions are necessary to defeat apartheid. They differ, though, on which struggle will predominate, the armed or the economic. Clive Thompson says, "The next time unrest and political organizations peak, the trade unions will finally be at the point where the state and big capital will be overwhelmed."

To delay such a day means the A.N.C. will see itself forced to spill more and more white blood. The government will retaliate with even greater violence, pushing the society closer to chaos. Older A.N.C. leaders warn that if South Africa follows the more violent road, when the day of change arrives, the A.N.C. lawyers and professionals with Witwatersrand and Cambridge degrees will be old or dead. They will have ceded power to their younger comrades, the guerrillas trained in the Soviet Union and Cuba. □

EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 394*)

plainants in sex discrimination suits," but that excuse merely reveals how little he knows about Title VII litigation. Not only are complainants plentiful, but judges expect to see them at a trial to buttress statistical evidence. Even the E.E.O.C. finally recognized the absurdity of claiming a nationwide pattern and practice of discrimination without presenting any victims. In the final weeks of the trial it presented two sales applicants to shore up its claim that there were women who were interested in selling on a commission basis who had been denied the opportunity. But the first applied for a full-time position at a store that had no full-time openings, and the second learned on the witness stand that two commission salespeople had been hired who had applied for the same job on the same day she did. One was a white woman and the other a black woman. The E.E.O.C. should have discovered those facts before putting its witnesses on the stand, but Wiener knew (or should have known) what happened at the trial. To present these two women as victims of discrimination at Sears is inexcusable.

Rosalind Rosenberg

THE VOICE OF REASON

Houston

In what I hope was only a momentary rage for simplification, Professor Jon Wiener misled *Nation* readers about the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's case against Sears, Roebuck & Company, did a disservice to the history profession and was unfair to Professor Rosalind Rosenberg.

The central question in the Sears case is whether numbers speak for themselves, a question one would have thought historians decided in the negative long ago. The E.E.O.C.'s case was based not on the testimony of complainants but almost entirely on the crude fact of statistical disparity between the number of men and the number of women in commission sales jobs.

Such a statistical discrepancy *could* be the result of discrimination, but it could equally well be the result of applicant preference and socialization. In other cases the E.E.O.C. has been able to resolve the inherent ambiguity of the numbers by presenting substantial independent evidence of discriminatory practices. In this case it did not do so. In spite of the consequent void of amplifying testimony, Rosenberg's critics claim to be certain that it was discrimination that produced the disparity. Let us not kid ourselves: what convinces them of their power to distinguish between the effects of discrimination and socialization in this particular set of statistics is dogma, not logic, reason or evidence.

Rosenberg's confidence that Sears did not discriminate may be wrong too, of course, for in the absence of complainant testimony no one can be certain about what went on in the job interviews. But at least her position is based on unrefuted evidence presented by Sears about its affirmative action program. Moreover, her position is compatible, as her critics' views are not, with the principle of our legal system that places the burden of proof on the accuser. Even corporations are innocent until proved guilty.

Wiener strove mightily to make it appear that Rosenberg is an isolated eccentric whose views enjoy no support among historians of women. The exact reverse is true. In the portions of the trial testimony that I read, Rosenberg's comments conformed scrupulously to all the complexities and nuances of the body of scholarship she was called on to discuss. Indeed, as becomes clear by the end of his article, what really offends Wiener is not a deviation from mainstream scholarly opinion but Rosenberg's candid admission of the complexity of that opinion. His objection is strictly political. He fears that "all arguments about distinctive female values play into the hands of conservatives." Rosenberg's sin is that she was willing to say in court what she and dozens of other historians (including the E.E.O.C.'s expert witness) had said unhesitatingly in print: that for women, even more than for men, the "economic man" model of motivation is hopelessly inadequate. It is not true that men or women rise reflexively to the bait of higher salary, like fish to a lure; only if that simplistic model of motivation were true would the Sears statistics constitute in themselves sufficient proof of discrimination.

To those who claim that all talk of complexity constitutes covert opposition to womens' equality, one can only reply that justice is better served by truth than zealotry. It is not feminism but certain shallow backwaters of Marxism and neoclassical economics that have a vested interest in simplistic theories of motivation. The intellectual subtlety and sophistication that marks the best work in women's history poses no threat to the legitimate interests of women, and historians who seek to suppress that work in public forums display little faith in their cause and scant respect for the intellectual values of their profession.

Thomas L. Haskell
History Department, Rice University

WIENER REPLIES

New York City

Rosalind Rosenberg writes not just as a historian of women but also as a member of the Sears, Roebuck & Company legal defense team. What her letter describes as her own conclusions are also the official Sears positions, argued in court by company attorneys. Sears tried to get other historians of women to take on this role, but all of them refused. Rosenberg's letter goes beyond defending her own testimony; she responds to virtually every one of the E.E.O.C. criticisms of Sears's employment practices. And she goes further, asserting that the E.E.O.C. case against Sears "endangers the cause of women's rights." It's hard to understand how an experienced feminist like Rosenberg can make such a claim.

Rosenberg says Sears established its affirmative action program in 1968, not in 1973 as I reported. That is not an agreed upon fact; Rosenberg is repeating a claim that appears in Sears's legal documents. This "program" did not even mention hiring or promoting women to commission sales positions, the higher-paying jobs which are at issue in the case. It established no mechanism to reach the program's goals. Only in 1974 did Sears implement a genuine affirmative action program, which specified the obligations of managers and established what Rosenberg calls a "50 percent affirmative action quota." But she acknowledges that this quota was not for women. It reserved half of the new jobs for white men and the other half for women *or* minority

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men. Rosenberg also neglects to report that although the program succeeded for minority men, it failed to reach its goals for women. That failure is at issue in this trial.

Rosenberg writes that she never said history proves "women don't want commission sales jobs." Her written testimony, summing up the relevant historical evidence, concluded that men and women differ in, among other things, "the types of jobs they prefer." In the context of this case that can mean only that Sears didn't hire more women for their good jobs because women "prefer" not to take them.

Why didn't the E.E.O.C. present complainants? E.E.O.C. attorneys explained that given the hundreds of thousands of women who have worked at Sears since 1973 and the 1 million-plus female applicants for jobs, Sears could have argued—correctly—that twenty-five or thirty complainants were insignificant. The only good evidence of a pattern of discrimination is statistical: How many qualified women applied? How many were hired and promoted? Rosenberg calls this argument an "absurdity," and Thomas L. Haskell calls it "crude," but statistics provide the basis for every sex or race discrimination suit and every settlement.

When Rosenberg and Haskell criticize the E.E.O.C.'s reliance on statistics to demonstrate bias, they are not just arguing an academic point. Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d recently proclaimed that statistical cases don't prove anything because the victims of discrimination are not groups but individuals. That argument serves as the Reagan Administration's rationale in its attack on all affirmative action, including voting rights and job quotas. Do Rosenberg and Haskell really want to ally themselves with this effort?

Discussing the E.E.O.C. case against Sears, Rosenberg quotes a judge referring to a "massive search for victims." In fact, the judge in question was not referring to an E.E.O.C. search. He was referring to an effort made by the National Organization for Women and other feminist groups, which had organized their own protest against Sears earlier in the 1970s. The E.E.O.C. never made any search for victims. In this case Rosenberg appears to have used a quotation provided to her by Sears attorneys without understanding its context.

Rosenberg says Sears presented evidence, "sworn to at trial, of women who declined offers" of the jobs at issue. None of the sworn testimony, however, came from the women in question; all of it came from Sears managers and officials, and most of it consisted of their own anecdotes and opinions. The Sears corporate director of equal opportunity, for instance, testified that women declined jobs selling tires because they didn't like going outside when "it's snowing or raining or whatever." This statement was indeed sworn to at trial, but does it really tell us anything about women? In fact, it is evidence of Sears executives' sexist attitudes, evidence which supports the E.E.O.C. claim of sex bias at Sears.

Rosenberg argues that evidence that women don't want good jobs can be found in Sears's Exhibit 25, which listed 680 women who Sears claimed turned down promotions. She is right that "the names are there," but the lists don't prove her point. The E.E.O.C. complaint is limited to the issue of hiring women and promoting them from noncommission to commission sales between 1973 and 1979. Sears's lists include a great deal of irrelevant information about offers of nonsales jobs, which were not at issue; offers to women, such as secretaries and managers, who were not covered by the complaint; and offers of promotions before 1973 and after 1979, years not applicable to the suit. They include statements by managers that various women weren't interested in promotions to jobs for which there were no openings at the time. Sears attorneys had the resources to organize their data to focus on relevant women who turned down real offers of the jobs at issue in this case, but Sears refused to do so. The refusal suggests that their purpose in presenting Exhibit 25 was not to inform but to mislead.

On the statistical issues, Rosenberg says the fact that 29 percent of Sears's commission sales positions were held by women in 1980 is "irrelevant." But the 1980 statistics are essential to the lawsuit, which covers the years 1973 to 1979. And because Sears's goal for women had been 38 percent, the 29 percent figure is highly relevant evidence of Sears's failure to meet its own goal.

Rosenberg challenges my account of bias in the questionnaire Sears used in its hiring process. She does not deny that applicants were asked whether they liked boxing, swore often, enjoyed an event more when they bet on it or spoke with a low voice. Those items made up the "vigor" dimension, which the Sears testing manual identified as the best predictor of success in commission sales. Other dimensions on the test had separate standards for women and men, but the manual recommended the same cutoff point on the vigor dimension for women and men in big-ticket commission sales; applicants with low scores, predominantly women, were not recommended for hiring. Yet Sears never presented evidence that this kind of "vigor" had anything to do with selling on commission.

Rosenberg's account in her concluding paragraph of the two sales applicants who appeared in court is simply wrong. The E.E.O.C. never claimed Sears should have hired the two women. At issue was the argument Rosenberg and Sears made throughout the trial: women do not want the good jobs at Sears. The women in question were identified not by the E.E.O.C. but by Sears attorneys, who presented their applications as evidence that women didn't want commission sales jobs. The E.E.O.C. managed to find them. Each said she had indeed been interested and showed she was also qualified.

Rosenberg's loyalty to Sears is evident in that she has not uttered a word of dissent from the summation of the case presented by Charles Morgan, Sears's chief attorney and the man for whom Rosenberg worked on this case. He told the judge that men don't discriminate against women at all: "Strange, isn't it, that we live in a world where there is supposed to be a monopsony of white men who somehow get up every morning trying to find a way to discriminate against their wives, their daughters, their mothers, their sisters." How an experienced feminist like Rosenberg could have become such a fierce defender of this cause remains a mystery.

Haskell has gotten lost in the complexities and nuances of history. What was at issue in U.S. District Court in Chicago was not the adequacy of various models of human motivation but sex bias at Sears. Rosenberg's testimony turned most of American women's history into evidence that Sears did not discriminate against women. She had to do that, or else her testimony would have been irrelevant. That is what leading historians of American women have objected to. If Rosenberg represents "mainstream scholarly opinion," as Haskell says, why were Sears attorneys unable to persuade any other historian of women to join her in testifying for the company? Why do the historians she cited in her brief object to her treatment of their work? Why is he unable to name any prominent historians of women who agree with her?

Haskell's letter repeats a fundamental falsehood of Rosenberg's about the case: that the E.E.O.C.'s evidence against Sears is purely statistical. Although the E.E.O.C. did not present individual complainants, it did present a great deal of evidence about Sears's discriminatory practices, evidence that went far beyond statistics. It included evidence about Sears's biased testing of applicants (the notorious question, Do you like boxing?); Sears's problematic interview procedure, with its lack of controls against interviewer bias and lack of training for interviewers; and Sears's discriminatory practice of basing promotions on unwritten, subjective criteria. The Sears defense, explaining why the company failed to hire more women, itself suggested the existence of biased attitudes and practices—the most memorable example being the testimony of the Sears director of equal opportunity, who reported that women don't like to go out in the rain.

Haskell writes that the historians who disagree with Rosenberg are tied to "dogma" rather than "reason or evidence," that they are zealots who seek to "suppress" the truth and that they inhabit "certain shallow backwaters of Marxism." It's notable that Rosenberg's critics have not resorted to Haskell's kind of name-calling. Let's not kid ourselves: these aren't arguments; this is hysteria.

Jon Wiener

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Near Pavilions!

ARTHUR C. DANTO

The exclamatory shriek in the title India!—as if it named an ill-considered musical based on the *Mahabharata*—is doubtless intended to express the excitement with which visitors are meant to view the frantically designated exhibition that will remain in sullen and inert splendor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art until January 5, 1986. But in English punctuation the exclamation point has other senses more appropriate to the reality of the show. It marks, for example, the expression of a wish: "India!" meaning, "If only it were a show of Indian art as marvelous as the one that went instead to the National Gallery in Washington earlier this year!" It can also transform the word it emphasizes into a scornful quotation, so that "India!" might well be a one-word criticism of the entire enterprise: "If *this* is India, then. . . !"

The museum's press release characterizes the intended extravaganza as "a comprehensive exhibition of the art of India from the fourteenth through the nineteenth century." It consists, certainly, of work done in India, in some instances by Indians, but done for the pleasure and to the taste of the Islamic conquerors of India. Imagine, for analogy, a show called Mexico! which devoted one small room to various pieces of pre-Columbian art, with the remaining seven or eight galleries filled with Hispanic altarpieces, portraits of landed proprietors and their families and servants, fragments of hacienda architecture, some ornamental firearms and flamboyant ironwork and, of course, a certain number of objects of *vertu*—of the gold and silver that brought rapacious conquistadors to the halls of Montezuma in the first place. Mexico! would naturally exclude those twentieth-century artists—Rivera, Oroszco, Siqueiros—who sought artistic community with forms of expression stunted and diverted by ruthless oppressors. The present show represents the imposition on Indian sensibilities of an alien culture, a fanatically insisted upon religion and a different ordering of artistic values. To call the first gallery, with its sparse display of genuinely Indian art, The Great Tradition is merely sardonic. The vast bulk of objects displayed in succeeding galleries have as little connection with the few great bronzes we see in that first room as an early Bible, printed in the city of Pueblo, might have with a Mayan codex from Cichen Itza.

Now there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the idea of an exhibition of Islamic art from India, with its emphasis on the esthetic preferences and artistic patronage of the Mogul sultanate. Nor can it be denied that Islam is and has been part of India since the Moslem invasions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the agonies of partition notwithstanding. But it is inconsistent with the alleged pedagogical aims of a museum of the Metropolitan's stature to mislead visitors, whose grip on Indian history, let alone on the principles of Indian art, is not strong, into believing that it is being given the very essence of India (!) in a show which all but leaves that essence out.

The show is, in fact, vulgarity through and through, all stridency and hyperbole. A hanging from Andhra "has never been seen outside India"—as if that were artistically relevant. There is a carved emerald two inches across (!) and weighing 232 carats (!): "There is no likelihood of material of this size and quality ever again being mined," the catalog ecstasizes. But if you did not know it was an emerald (!) you would not be much affected by the green lump crudely incised with an inappropriate depiction of trees. The paradigm exhibit is a palatial tent from the reign of Shah Jahan, twelve feet high and twenty-four feet square, made of gold-embroidered red velvet. It is a sumptuous curiosity, a glimpse into a state of mind on which cost exercised no constraints. And so are the jeweled daggers, the jade hookahs, the nephrite inkpot with the gold mounting, the ceremonial spoon set with rubies, emeralds and diamonds, the gilded palanquin of Rajasthan and the pearled Baroda carpet. "Dazzling!" is the catalog's adjective of choice for items in an exhibition that looks as though the Met's gift shop had been moved upstairs. And since museums today tend to be gift shops surrounded by the objects of which the gift shop purveys reproductions, even the gaudiest and rarest of the displayed *bibelots* and bric-a-brac look like reproductions of themselves. The transition from the final gallery into the convenient boutique of pertinent souvenirs is indiscernible. All that is missing is a barker got up in a turban and curled slippers to drum up trade.

India! presents itself as the focal point in a nationwide Festival of India, which began last June with a brilliant exhibition of Indian sculpture in Washington. The finest pieces in the Met's show—a Shiva and a Parvati from Vijayanagar, and the museum's own magnificent nursing Krishna, all three in bronze—typify the level of artistic achievement attained by every piece, and transcended by many pieces, in the Washington show. The grace, warmth, intensity, exuberance and spirituality of the great works of Indian sculpture shown there were enhanced by the chaste surroundings and the gray light of the National Gallery's east wing. The objects in New York are seen as in the darkness of a treasury, and one feels like a tourist allowed in to gape at priceless frivolities rather than, as in Washington, a pilgrim in the presence of divinities. The New York show coincided with a parade on Fifth Avenue, augmented by elephants—naturally—which the Sunday *New York Times* showed on its front page. *The Times* devoted no fewer than five articles to the show during its opening week, culminating in a nearly full-page hymn to its wonders by the chief art critic. It was almost as if our major newspaper had become an annex of the overheated publicity offices of our major museum. Whatever the reality, the impression was one of desperate oversell.

"The best exhibitions," John Russell wrote in his best stardust prose, "are acts of love, and 'India!' is one of them." Not even The Beatles could seriously have supposed that all you need is love: the best exhibitions are based on ideas and are acts of intelligence. "The zestful curator of 'India!,'" to quote the headline of another *Times* piece, seems to have had the idea of negotiating into exhibition space as many extravagant ornaments of Indo-Islamic craftsmanship as he could, of superimposing upon them a desultory chronological order and prefacing the jumble with a grudging room of truly

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Indian art (The Great Tradition)—and leaving the show at that except for a misguided and perfunctory gesture in the direction of education, the inclusion of some objects chiefly of anthropological interest from villages and tribal outposts. The lavishly illustrated catalog he produced reads like a flyer from Banana Republic. Under the rapturous prose, to be sure, it transmits a lot of information about the individual objects. What it and the show fail to do is to enable the objects to release artistic information in one another. The show is merely the sum of its precious parts.

Stuart Cary Welch, the zestful curator, sounds as if he knew better. "You have to see works of art as an aspect of culture," he declared in the *Times* interview. "If you don't know the other parts of the culture, you see less in the works of art. Your eyes see more when you know more." I concur. I also concur with the corollaries: if you know nothing your eyes see nothing; and if you know nothing about the other parts of the culture, you know nothing about its works of art. Welch doubtless knows so much that he can see the whole of India, or at least India!, in each of its displayed fragments. But that knowledge is not transmitted through the objects alone, and an intelligent curatorship must establish the cognitive context for artistic appreciation. This he has failed to do.

Consider, for example, a beautiful wine cup in white nephrite. Its handle has the form of a goat's head bent back to contemplate its body assuming the improbable shape of a flower. One's eyes trace and retrace the astonishing gradients of metamorphosis as the goat swells into the voluptuous petals. The impossible, even hallucinogenic fusion of animal, vegetable and mineral could hardly have belonged to anyone but its owner, the great Shah Jahan, fifth Emperor of the Mogul dynasty. That wine cup encapsulates the whole of Shah Jahan's stupendous vision, but how is one to see it in that true light if one cannot connect it with the Taj Mahal, which Shah Jahan built as the tomb for a beloved wife; if one does not see in it the immense astronomical devices he built in Shahjahanabad (now New Delhi), which stand like a complex of gigantic sculptures; if one has not been awed by the image of Shah Jahan's own unachieved tomb, a duplicate of the Taj Mahal but in black mar-

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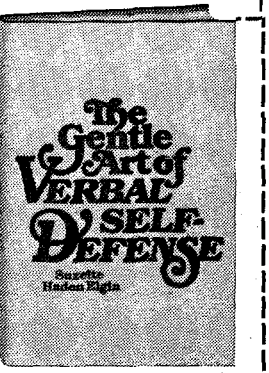

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ble, across the Jumna River from its white counterpart; if one is ignorant of the perfect simplicities of the Pearl Mosque of Agra? The viewer is given none of this; the object stands in isolation in a glass case with a factual label. The catalog says soupily, "The goat bleats plaintively, appreciative of Shah Jahan's sadnesses earlier in life, and lamenting painful times to come." This is false, silly, useless. It is art writing at its characteristic worst. It is crap. And a magnificent opportunity is sacrificed, for the wine cup is not surrounded by the photographs or engravings that would enable one to see it as infused with the spirit of architecture. Shah Jahan was one of the great builders of history.

And so was his grandfather, Akbar the Great, whose tomb at Sikandra, near Agra, swarms today with irascible green monkeys, and whose long deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri is a sculptured world in rose sandstone. That city, with its gates, its mosques, its divan, its palaces and battlements, its vast square marked in such a way that Akbar and his queen could move the women of the harem from position to position in games of backgammon, is a metaphor for Akbar's mind and the culture he fused out of disparate elements and imposed on the world he dominated. He was a lavish and enlightened patron of the arts, a military and administrative genius, but there is no way one can grasp the unity of his singular achievement from the confusion of objects lumped together here. I was not surprised to see visitors wandering from display to display with none of the excitement a great exhibition arouses. They were quietly puzzled. On occasion, someone would murmur, "How exquisite!" before some object, an opium cup, for example. That cup is truly exquisite, with ruby petals and emerald leaves edged in gold and set into a calyx of polished jade. But the depths of meaning locked in that exquisiteness are left to languish.

Naturally, there are some rewarding moments: a watercolor in rolling perspective of a harem garden with filigreed pavilions, ornamental birds, regimented flower beds, elegantly scarved women with stringed instruments and hookahs; a study of a resting tiger from Punjab; a poppy from Rajasthan which Ruskin could have endorsed. A luminous portrait of a rani's monkey holding its red leash in its witty tail and looking like a Buddhist monk. These are the little openings into ways of seeing and feeling that it is one of the joys of art to share for a moment. It is gratifying to see that their modest power stands up against the surrounding arrogance and sultanic indulgence.

One thinks of the immense enterprise that went into the assembling of all this—the trips to India, the lucky finds—and all the money. And then the failure of nerve in simply spilling it out without enough structure to give it life, and the lapse of taste which is emblemized in the hateful exclamation point, the hoopla and elephants, the Barnum disdain for rubes. There is a kind of Mogul dimension to the show itself, opulent and decadent, imperial but with a fatal lassitude. In that sense the show becomes symbolic of its subject. But it gives the framers of the museum too much credit to suppose they are making that sort of point, succeeding through dramatic failure. □

THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

Song & Dance (with a backward glance at musicals past)

I wish some day
I could find my way
To the land where the good songs go.
—Miss 1917, *by Jerome Kern and P.G. Wodehouse*

Indigenous music genres in America almost always follow a cyclical path. The music begins as a raw, seemingly untutored outpouring from one or another part of the working class. It is brilliant, original, energetic. But because its basic ideas tend to be simple, the genre quickly runs aground. Well schooled composers and arrangers and theatrical showmen feel obliged to take over. They have great success. A euphoria sets in—the music achieves a golden age—and critics begin to talk about high art, about Beethoven and Mozart, and the glorious future that lies ahead.

But no sooner does high art get mentioned than younger musicians and audiences notice that the music has lost something. It has become pretentious and sentimental. The extra polish and refinement have stifled its life. The skills required to produce the original sound have somehow been lost. And filled with revulsion for everything that so-called sophistication has done to the beloved genre, the younger musicians lead a fundamentalist uprising. Back to the original concept, they cry. Back to the old-time music that grates and offends, that lacks polish, that sounds untrained or unintelligent, but in fact is not. And with these goals in mind, the younger musicians manage to kick the old form back into shape. They don't necessarily re-create the original style in every particular. But they recapture its spirit, they make it young again, and the music survives.

Jazz has followed this path two or three times by now. In the late 1930s and 1940s, for instance, sophisticated musicians wrote complex orchestrations, invented colors and moods, added quite a lot of depth to the old dance-hall big-band music. And within a few years the original fire and freedom were lost. The sophistication left no room for collective improvisation or solo experimentation. These skills shriveled. The music grew ever more tired and gimmicky and would surely have died—as mass entertainment, it did die—except that various sidemen staged the bebop revolution. They emphasized improvisation and a raw sound. They weren't afraid of being noisy or ugly—only of lacking spirit. And in this manner they rejuvenated jazz.

Rock music is always going through something similar. The arrangers clean it up, make it slick, add complexity and new techniques, and these contributions extend the music's possibilities. But sooner or later someone discovers that the new bands no longer know how to rock 'n' roll. Then the cry goes up, Back to the fifties! Back to the blues and the shuffle and "Roll Over, Beethoven"! The music shakes off its slumber. Country and western? The same, of course. String orchestras appear in the background, lyricists strive for self-consciously poetic effects. And someone is shortly leading a walkout from the recording studio to go back to wailing with a saw-tooth voice and plucking ferociously on a broken-down banjo.

What, then, of that fourth popular American form, Tin Pan Alley, the music of Broadway? This music is obviously different from the other genres,

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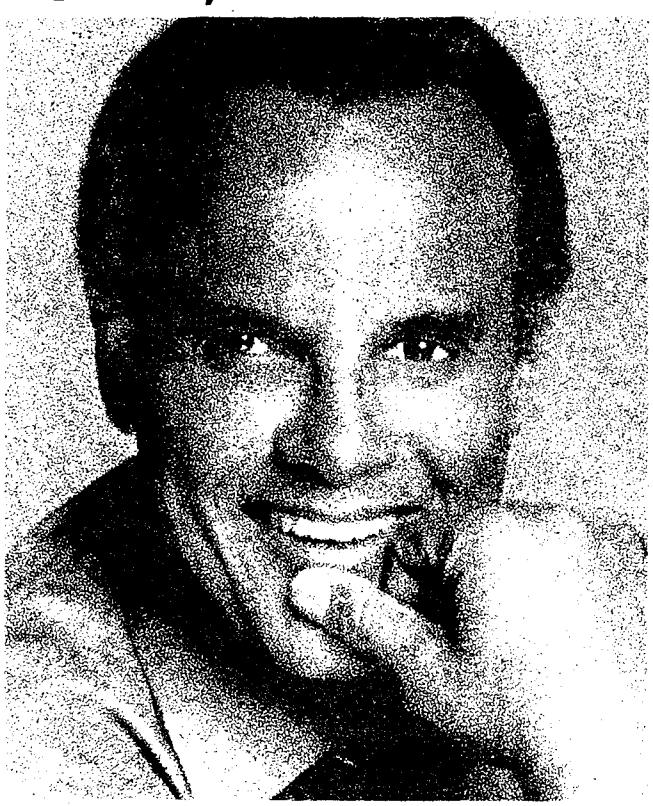

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was never folkish and raw, was always slick and commercial. Nevertheless it can certainly claim the first step along the cyclical path. You could see that last spring in a musical called *Harrigan 'n Hart*, which had a very brief run. Harrigan and Hart were real-life vaudevillians in the late nineteenth century who are sometimes credited with being the first people to string their songs and routines along a story line, thus inventing the American musical. Last season's show about them recreated that achievement against a clever backdrop which reproduced a photograph of late nineteenth-century New York on the brick rear wall of the stage. You saw the rickety tenements of a hundred years ago towering over a wood-frame structure from a still earlier era in the city's history. The particular neighborhood was said to be Five Points, a forgotten name for the Irish quarter at the southern tip of Manhattan where the worst streets of nineteenth-century New York used to be. Harrigan and Hart began in Five Points. Later they moved uptown to the Lower East Side in order to entertain the new mass audience that was arriving from Eastern Europe, and the same backdrop sufficed for that neighborhood, too.

That backdrop could in fact have done for any number of streets bearing on Tin Pan Alley—the streets that George Burns and Harpo Marx evoked in their memoirs and that Samuel Ornitz (of the Hollywood Ten) described in his classic *Haunch, Paunch and Jowl*, where the little gangsters go from East Side slums to big musical careers on Broadway. For just as the black districts of New Orleans and Chicago played a crucial role in the rise of jazz and the industrial towns that Bruce Springsteen sings about have played a part in generating rock 'n' roll, so the New York slums were crucial in the rise of Broadway, though perhaps not in exactly the same way. *Harrigan 'n Hart* did a fine thing, then, by performing the original songs in that old-time setting with the proletarian vista in back and the ornate proscenium of the Longacre Theatre—itself a landmark from 1913—in front and the fancy stage boxes to the right and left. The setting evoked the short trek from Baxter Street to Broadway with a perfectly unselfconscious authenticity. No one who ever made that trek in life would have wanted something different.

The actual Harrigan and Hart songs tended to be light, witty, catchy, energetic, simple, innocent. They praised the belles of Avenue A. They boasted about the Irish of Mulligan Alley. And one could reasonably conclude that music like that was what the music lovers of the Lower East Side loved to hear, and to invent, and that from such beginnings came the more impressive Tin Pan achievements of later years.

So Broadway music does share the starting element in the American music cycle, the social origin in a working-class district—even if this origin, in Tin Pan Alley's case, produced a music that was commercial and polished, more European in style and not at all rough. The music of Broadway also displays a second element in the cycle: the drive toward complexity and sophistication, the aspiration toward high art and the loss of inspiration and skill that comes in the wake of that drive. *Harrigan 'n Hart* was all too good an example. There was a painful contradiction in the play. The original songs, accompanied by dance routines that in some cases might well have come from the same era, were wonderfully simple and naïve. But nearly everything else showed modern Broadway sophistication gone berserk. The staging was all razzle-dazzle. The pacing went at a frantic double-time. There was an effort to make the characters psychologically profound, to give drama to their lives, to induce serious emotions. There was even a dash of social significance, showing that homosexual repression is a bad thing. And those poor simple songs of the original vaudevillians could hardly bear up under the weight of all that pretentiousness and strain. The show was typical of modern musicals in that respect, and one came away from it feeling exhausted, dizzy and depressed.

But *Harrigan 'n Hart* is dead and gone. A better example of Broadway in a lofty state of sophistication is Andrew Lloyd Weber's new *Song & Dance*, which opened the musical season last month. The new Weber follows an adventurous young Englishwoman (Bernadette Peters) to New York City, where she meets various men who don't work out, writes travel reportage home to Mom and tries to make her fortune. Through the first half of the show Peters is alone on stage, singing and acting with splendid gusto and talent, except when she's called on to sing in a soul style—and even then she manages to be charming. The second half follows

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one of her men through his own New York adventures, and is performed almost entirely in ballet choreographed by Peter Martins. This half has one excellent moment, when Christopher d'Amboise, the lead, tap-dances with the witty Gregg Burge and succeeds (quite by coincidence, so far as the thrust of my argument goes) in capturing the very spirit of the New York streets that has always lurked behind the Broadway musical—the élan of young men who wear their caps backward and their undershirts sleeveless and who display an amazing repertoire of struts, bops and moves merely by hanging out under streetlights. D'Amboise is unfortunately not really a leading man, and the choreography isn't really a leading choreography, and Act II, apart from this moment, is a pretty sodden affair.

Song & Dance mostly features the same quality that Weber has brought to all his shows, the illusion that you are seeing something modern and up-to-date, something that embodies precisely the sophistication that theatergoers are thought to crave. The first act's *Song* follows a rock 'n' roll path, and the second act's *Dance* plays variations on something by Paganini, and Weber weaves these elements together, not without facility, I might add. Solo cello in the classical style alternates with riffing alto sax in a pop style, and you are struck by how well these instruments mesh, how natural the classical/rock combination seems. It's true that Weber knows only a handful of musical tricks and uses them to demagogic effect, invariably in a tragic-mode minor key at a magisterial pace ("Don't Cry for Me, Argentina," "Memory" and something in the new show, too). Yet this handful of tricks always seems ambitious, always seems to strive toward the higher reaches of classical accomplishment, seems to be experimenting with something not at all trivial, something greater than mere Broadway, something artistically serious. That is why he feels himself equipped to collaborate with T.S. Eliot in *Cats* and Paganini in *Song & Dance*. That is what qualifies him for popular success, what makes him a worthy peer of Stephen Sondheim, who is the past master at conveying the impression of Broadway reaching to the lofty heights of artistic seriousness.

The reality, though, is that Weber's seeming sophistication conceals the loss of skill that always occurs when a popular genre takes on airs. The man's entire work might be cited in illustration of the process described by the economist Harry Braverman. According to Braverman, industry in the twentieth century has projected the illusion that work is increasingly skilled and that more and more of the work force possesses some form of industrial mastery; but in fact the work force has become ever less skilled and work has become ever more degraded. Just so with the techniques of musical theater. Weber's shows always seem plagued by microphone problems. That is not because someone in the production crew has turned the wrong dial. It is because Weber's style calls for modern vocal technique, the technique of singing to amplification, which is virtually no technique at all; and microphone technology is in no state to pick up the slack.

Even a well-trained singer will sound wheezy and distorted in a Weber role, since the composer has written off training. The structure of the music shows a similar diminution of skill. Weber can write melodies, also phrases that sound moving and swells that surge into melodramatic climaxes. He can give the *impression* of mastery. But the delicate and pleasing structure of a song is beyond him. Instead you get two hours of climax, punctuated now and then by a glorious crescendo and weighted down by endless repetition. Occasional repetition is, of course, legitimate. But there's an art to doing this, a way of making reprises into bits of humor or getting some other advantage out of them, of using them to deepen the score, not to add six extra minutes. Weber adds the six minutes and lets it go at that. He may look like he's tottering on the edge of classical seriousness, on the edge of something far more modern and sophisticated than the tacky conventions of silly old Broadway; but an evening of Andrew Lloyd Weber remains an evening of functional illiteracy in the art of theater music, in the old-fashioned basics of form.

What are these basics? Since almost no one displays them today we must glance backward, not to the period of the musical's golden age in the 1940s and early 1950s—when sophistication, as always during a golden age, was al-

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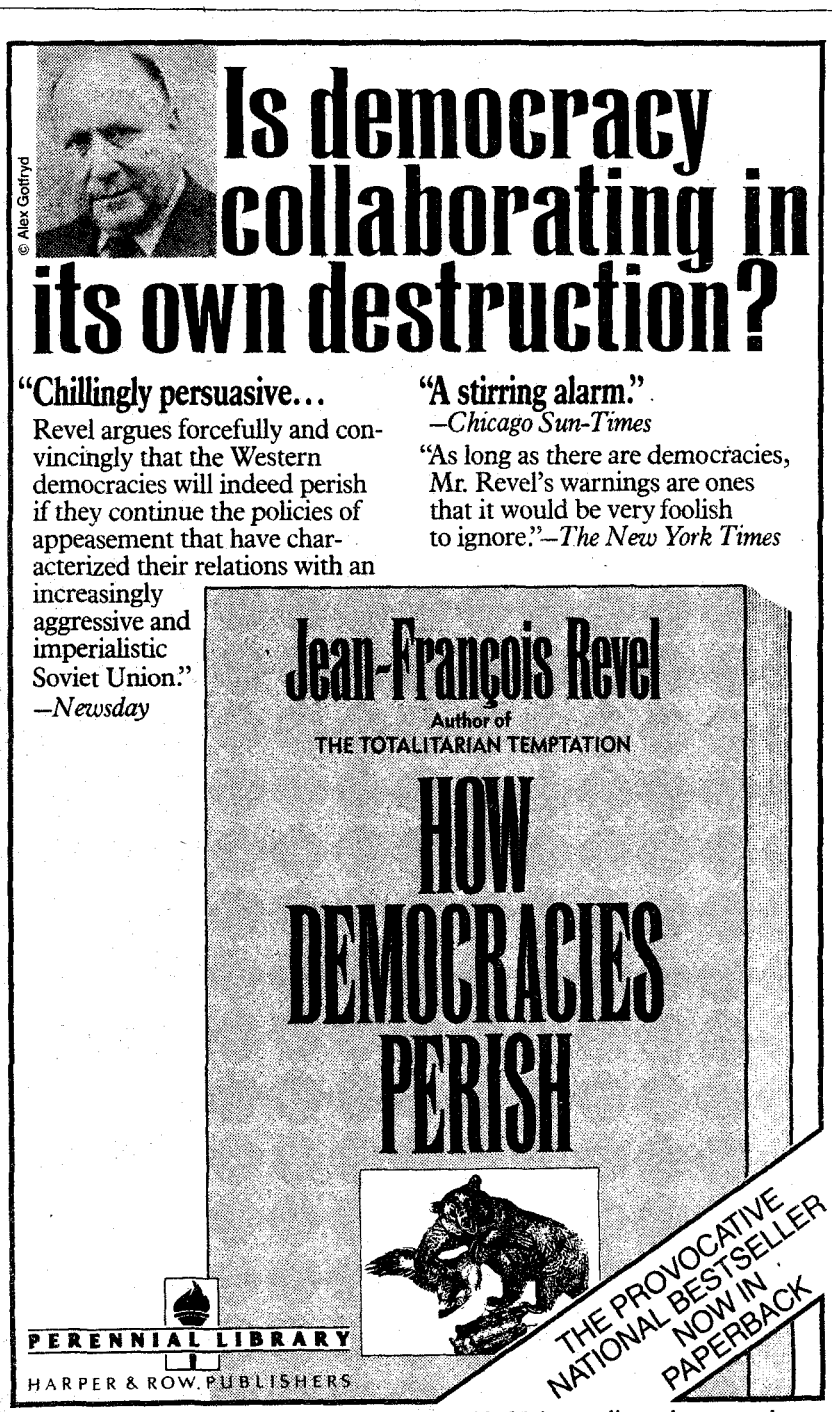
ready stalking the neighborhood and critics here and there were mumbling about greatness—but instead to the period before that, when the form was still more or less unselfconscious. 1985 is Jerome Kern's centennial, and among the high points of last spring's season were several concert renditions of his early musicals. The best of these were *Oh, Boy!* and *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, performed at the Carnegie Recital Hall under the direction of John McGlinn. These plays are two of the "Princess Theater musicals," which Kern wrote during World War I with Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse (famous New York proletarians all, I realize—though who really was Kern? Just another City College boy . . .). The plots, set among F. Scott Fitzgerald Long Island millionaires, weave variations on a sturdy theme: A wealthy young prig wishes to marry the sweet, prim girl of his dreams, but due to some fantastic coincidences, comes off looking like a dissolute roué of heinous character and zero marriageability. Clearing himself only makes matters worse, which is to say, inanity piles on inanity. Mostly there are one-liners, nicely set up, too. "You mean—she's a thief?" "Let us say, a practical socialist." "Do be careful of that wedding gown, darling. Remember, you may need it again soon." "If men were dominoes, he would have been a double blank." The scores remain calm, lovely, almost placid. There are no grand crescendos, no dramatic effects, no powerful high points skimmed from Rachmaninoff or Tchaikovsky. The typical orchestration calls for a sweet trumpet solo playing in unison with the violins, Vienna-style.

The Princess Theater musicals had none of the pretensions we have come to expect from modern musicals, none of the social significance or highbrow affectations, none of the heavy irony and world-weariness. They were, from one point of view, perfectly idiotic. But to be perfectly anything requires skill, and the perfection in these early shows manages in fact to be more intellectually satisfying than anything you can see on the modern musical stage. The silly plots unfold like Chinese puzzles. The lyrics manage to move the story forward. The score is disciplined. The songs themselves—which in these two shows include "Bill," "Till the Clouds Roll By" and "Nesting Time in Flatbush"—answer to a structure of recitative, introduction, theme and development, so that one listens to them in delighted anticipation. Reprises are invariably clever. A mellow ballad turns into a caustic satire, a humorous ditty becomes a touching love song, a flat-sounding line suddenly seems brilliant—merely by careful placement in a different context. Nice trick, you keep saying to yourself as the score unfolds, clever stroke—until you are enjoying yourself heartily merely appreciating the craft.

What all this achieves, finally, is an atmosphere of marvelous relaxation. The music is so unforced and unassuming, so sensible and tasteful, that you come away thinking Kern must have had an unblemished personality. There is a mood of simplicity and innocence. Ask theater people from around the world what they enjoy from their American colleagues and they will say, the musicals. And the reason is obvious, seeing these little gems from the musical stage of almost seventy years ago. Many countries have generated some form of serious drama, but it is this country's achievement to have been able to float a piece of theater six feet off the stage, to convey a feeling of perfect simplicity, untouched by neurosis, rage, despair or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cynicism, a childlike wisp of innocence that sends you out of the theater not so much humming the tunes as walking on a cloud. A sense of innocence and simplicity is one of the great traits of American culture (God knows why); and the Broadway musical is the art form that has best captured that distinguishing mood. A profound achievement? Maybe not. But it is an achievement.

It is not for the musical writers of today, however. Today's writers are too serious for anything lightweight. They are so intelligent and sophisticated they can't conceive of how much skill they have lost. For them the final phase of the American music cycle—the return to basics, to the original inspiration and skills, the sweeping away of false ambition—holds no appeal. Somehow alone of all popular American music genres, the Broadway musical has avoided the last turn in the recurrent cycle, the turn toward rejuvenation. The writers of today should be crying: "Back! Back—in some way or another, obviously not by museum re-creation—to 1917! Back to Kern and the old inventiveness and craft! Back to innocence, charm, witty inanity! Back to the particular something that no other theatrical form in the world can accomplish, but could once be done by the American musical! Back to the spirit that once flourished among so many composers and writers and performers who came up in the New York streets!" In short,

I wish some day
I could find my way
To the land where the good songs go.

But though you hear many things in the modern musical theater—you hear rock 'n' roll experiments, synthesizers of every shape and design, improvements on Puccini and Paganini—you do not hear that melodious cry. □

FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

The Kiss of the Spider Woman

In the early stages of William Hurt's performance as Molina, the Brazilian transvestite and petty pederast trapped in a prison cell, a well-worn bit of Brit-lit apocrypha popped into my head. Two Victorian matrons are watching a particularly extravagant performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* in a London theater. As Cleopatra clutches the asp to her breast, Lady X turns to the dowager Z with a disapproving scowl: "My dear, how different—how very different—from the home life of our own dear Queen." After that, I could rarely suspend my disbelief in Hurt's clunky comportment, which seemed straight out of boot camp, if camp it was. No drag queen worth her boa and beads would flit with such a heavy foot, stifle so many screams or keep her eyes to such a low roll. Later in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, when Molina has occasion to visit a drag bar outside the prison, we see a room full of genuine rhinestones playing self-parody to the hilt and running riot in gender rebellion. Hurt acts like he's down there on a sociological visit, and it's not because he has undergone such a radical transformation in jail. He's still only every other inch a queen. He has simply got it all wrong, the psychology, the attitude and the meaning of his difficult and complex part, and his failure is fatal to the film.

Hector Babenco's rendering of Manuel Puig's novel is serious if not successful, which is more than you can say for most movies this year. It's a set-up situation: two utterly disparate characters are thrown together in one scummy cell. Valentin (Raul Julia), the bourgeois revolutionary, is a world apart from Molina, the window dresser, but in their altered state of confinement they bump against each other so often and so hard that their distance shrivels to an embrace—and more. In the process of interpenetration they exchange strings of their existential D.N.A. Valentin loses elements of his macho ego and Molina gives up some of his romantic escapism. It's a neat trick, usually turned more effectively on stage than on screen, in mannered pieces like *Two for the Seesaw* and *A Majority of One*. Male and female, Yiddishe mama and Samurai businessman, terrorist and drag queen, the point is always the same. Every culture has aspects which are useful to temper and enrich every other.

Writers and directors can make light of the point, which is none too heavy to begin with, or they can belabor it and freight it with significance far beyond its ability to bear the load. Writer Leonard Schrader (who is currently co-credited with the screenplay for his brother Paul's *Mishima* as well as *Kiss of the Spider Woman*) chooses hard labor. "What's wrong with being a wo-

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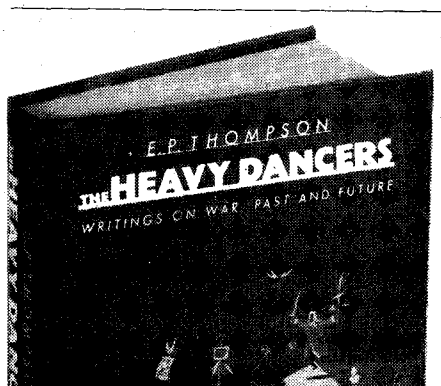

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man?" Molina asks Valentin, who has just made a sexist slur. "If more men acted like women there wouldn't be violence like *that*," he says, pointing at the scarred wound the political prisoner has suffered at the hands of brutal guards. The level of analysis rarely rises above such banalities, which sound like they're culled from articles on male sensitivity in early editions of *Ms.*.

In a turnabout Molina is berated for his triviality, his apolitical stance and his obsession with vampy heroines in silly old romantic movies. Valentin lives for his revolutionary cause; Molina lives in his fantasies. But although Molina learns a thing or two from his cellmate ("Never let yourself be humiliated again," Valentin tells him when Molina gets sprung), the major message travels on the opposite vector. It is Valentin the realist who becomes the fantasist, who will dream of dancing at his revolution, who will escape to paradise with the luscious lady that Molina has fabricated for him.

Kiss of the Spider Woman can be seen in another tradition, too: the curious category of movies that presume to treat the relationship of political milieu and sexual behavior. It is a short list, running from Bertolucci's *The Conformist* through Marek Kanievska's *Another Country* to this present entry, with perhaps a mention of Visconti's *The Damned* and Fosse's *Cabaret*. However effective those films may be, not one of them makes much sense about the sex-and-politics syndrome. Bertolucci wielded a mangled Reichian razor to suggest that political repression produces sexual perversion, which was simplistic at best. Why did fascism instill homosexual longings in one character and make all the others whatever they were? *Another Country* stood the thesis on its head and hinted that homosexuality leads to totalitarian sympathies and even treason, but it never said how. In his novel, Puig appended numerous footnotes with citations from Anna Freud, Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown and others, which provided a psychoanalytic explanation for sexual deviation, and Molina was shown to be working out his neurotic behavior with Valentin in the role of analyst *malgré lui*. To the extent that Molina's transference was successful he got straight and dropped his effeminate mannerisms.

Puig's attachment to Freudian explanations led him to disregard the evident springs of behavior that flow from

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the social environment and, perhaps, the genetic matrix, quite apart from the recesses of the old id. Babenco and Schrader buy the couch and illustrate the analytic material with outdated (and often offensive) dialogue about Molina's unnatural attachment to his mother, his unrequited love for heterosexual men (i.e., his father) and his identification with the sexually submissive female. Effeminacy, passivity and—quite literally—the receptive role in sexual intercourse are clearly equated with political irresponsibility. Drag queens don't make the revolution, which is where Fidel Castro agrees with Freud.

But don't they? The history of sexual politics in the United States and Western Europe over the last fifteen years suggests the opposite—that drag queens and analogous social, racial and sexual outcasts have the vision, energy and abandon to rise up angry against societies that give bountiful rewards to conformists. White male revolutionaries, on the other hand, have been notoriously limp and lackluster from Stonewall to Greenham Common. Perhaps Molina would do better in high heels and lipstick than Valentin in camouflage fatigues.

Even if *Kiss of the Spider Woman* gets its politics and psychology garbled, as a movie it evidences ambitions that should be respected. There are moments of high style and humor. Molina's descriptions of scenes from old movies are hilariously depicted in black and white footage, and Sonia Braga, as the recurring vamp, struts her stuff with exaggerated drollery. She's far and away the best drag queen in the picture, and Hurt, who got direction from a "choreographer" for his few ill-executed swirls around the cell, would have been wiser to imitate the easy exercises of the woman of his dreams. □

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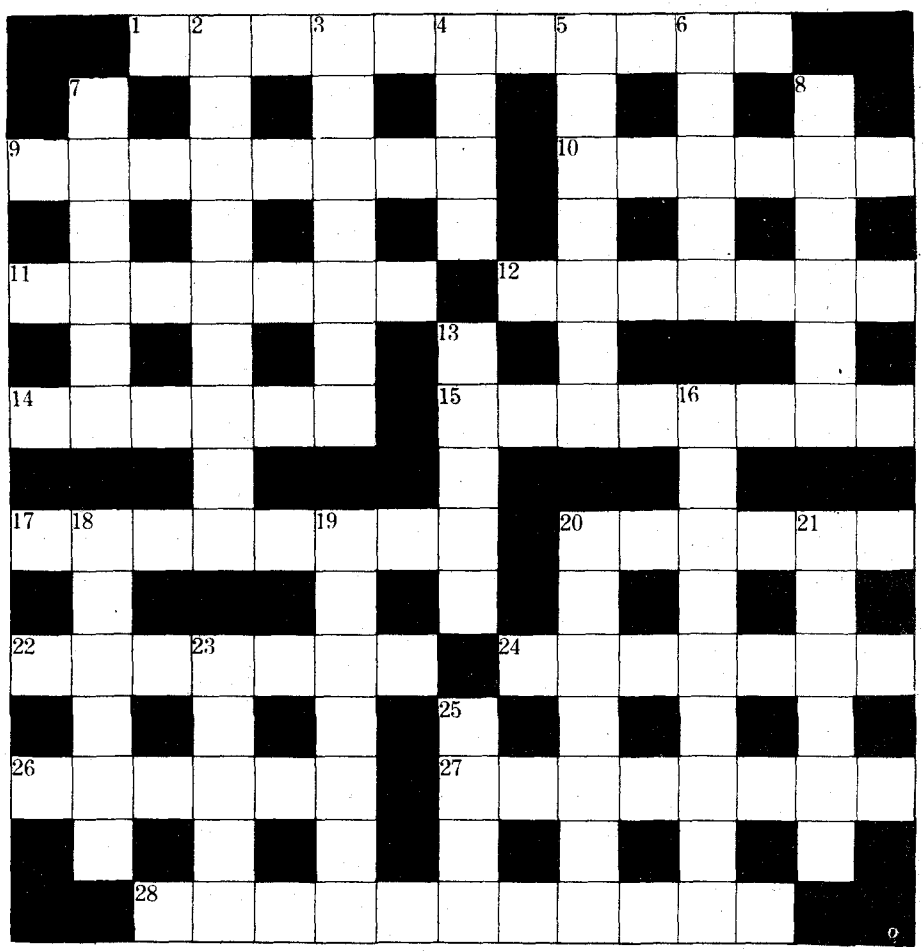

ACROSS

1 and 25 down Are seconds cut off if one arrives this way? (2,3,4,2,4)
9 Are cats tied with it? (The boss doesn't emulate Hitler when he does.) (8)
10 Where Arthur finally went with Gardner and Chaney? (6)
11 Such a blister has liquid of a sort in it—with some alcoholic content. (7)
12 Not words denoting action seen on the TV—really and truly being examples. (7)
14 What's left by burning wood and mineral? (All this might be called on board.) (6)
15 Has to be raised to be so. (Go and study, if backward!) (8)
17 See 8 down
20 One side in the boat mists up. (6)
22 Stripes designed to go on and on. (7)
24 Swine-hearted drunkards pour from them. (7)
26 Making things seem old-fashioned? A boy and a girl might have been said to be so, once. (6)
27 One might be so wounded by doing nothing. (8)
28 Temporarily it seems in favor of that time, formerly. (3,3,5)

DOWN

2 Music albums? (Put in corners, to be different.) (9)
3 Live wire? (The president might use one in an emergency.) (7)
4 Home for some? You could get sent out of it! (4)
5 The old region where each lad takes a turn. (7)
6 Is the tribe so up to the times? (5)
7 See 13
8 and 17 across Are they found in the deep woods? (6,8)
13 and 7 What might protect the eye during air travel? (They might have a reassuring beam.) (11)
16 Sort of green to mention something coming up with vigor. (9)
18 Not quite as near as spheres of conflict. (6)
19 Hit song possibly showing how wanted men were once shot. (2,5)
20 Sounds much higher than 17, and in the usual way raced off with nothing on. (7)
21 Might be made on the floor, and carried by those sitting there. (6)
23 Greek head, done in oils, perhaps—now found in Ireland. (5)
25 See 1 across

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